

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND.

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THE HISTORY OF RAILWAY UNIONISM IN NEW ZEALAND

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UNTIL THE PASSING OF THE "GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS

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SUPERANNUATION FUND ACT " 1902

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by

A M B E R.

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PREFACE.

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The industrial legislation of the present Labour Government of New Zealand has had the effect both of increasing the numerical strength of existent unions and of stimulating the foundation of new ones in previously unorganised vocations. Some students of economic problems in the Dominion seek a solution in a properly directed development of trade unionism.

Indeed, from the earliest days of settlement in New Zealand, the workers have been influenced by the trade union principles, which they brought with them from the Mother Country. It has, however, not been true to say that New Zealand has been ruled by trade union enthusiasts or principles. This seeming paradox can be explained when one realises that even today New Zealand is not a highly industrialised country; therefore the chief stimulus to trade union organisation has been lacking. I have endeavoured to show, in passing, how greatly the Industrial Revolution and all that it involved affected labour problems in England. Conditions in New Zealand have not been identical and therefore the developments have been different. Nevertheless, the New Zealand working man has been influenced by developments in the trade union world in England and elsewhere. New Zealand unions have developed on new lines in a new country, from a starting point, which was the result of centuries of slow growth in an older land

The railway servants have made up an important section of the working population of the Dominion. The railway system and its management has always been a subject of the utmost import-

ance to New Zealanders. So much has depended on the system of communications and transport of which, through the greater part of the Dominion's history, the railways have possessed the monopoly. The chief railway lines have been, from the date of their construction, the property of the State; except for two periods, when the control was in the hands of almost irresponsible boards, management was through Ministers of Public Works and of Railways. Any major question of railway control and management has been decided upon in Parliament. Public interest in railway affairs, more especially in the days of construction, was a lively one. When members of the staff attempted to organise trade unions, news-paper battles raged quite fiercely over the colony. Opponents of state control and of unionism foretold inevitable anarchy as the result of the existence of unions of railwaymen. With new conditions opinions changed. By 1890, when a Government with a progressive programme of economic and social legislation was elected, the right of railwaymen, as of other workers, to combine to secure a decent standard of life, was generally recognised.

The history of the railway societies has an interest for those concerned with the history of unionism in New Zealand. The membership of the unions is large, the A.S.R.S. numbering over 11,000 members, and the work performed by railwaymen so essential that the railway unions have held a key position in times of industrial crisis. Today there are four powerful unions of railwaymen, each with its own news-paper, head office and permanent staff in Wellington, each regularly meeting the General Manager &

Minister to discuss problems and make suggestions. Such is the success which has attended the efforts of the early enthusiasts, who as all progressives, persevered in the face of bitter opposition to secure the recognition of principles in which they believed and for which they fought.

I have endeavoured to trace the history of the trade union organisation and action on the New Zealand railways from the earliest days until the passing of the " Government Railways Superannuation Fund Act " 1902. By that date the days of beginnings were over and the two chief societies established. Although I have treated the subject mainly from the point of view of the history of the unions and of their attitude to important railway legislation, rather than from the point of view of the public or even the Railway Department, I have attempted to give some indication of the part played by the railway unions in the general industrial and social life of the Dominion. No organisation may be valued in isolation, its significance lies in its position in the life of the community .

Until 1894 the railway unions played a direct part in industrial struggles, but after that date, until the coming into power of the present Government, the unions were strictly barred from direct connections with outside labour or political associations. Despite this restriction, the railway unions preserved their keen interest in industrial developments, and, in any case, after the failure of 1890, most trade unions in New Zealand turned their energies to political activities and to the attempt to gain control of legislation, in which movement railway unionists, as citizens, could join.

My treatment is detailed, for I believe that justification for such lies in the significance of the subject for New Zealanders.



The activity and the Organisation of railway unions in New Zealand is also of interest to students of railway industrial problems in all countries. I have also been influenced, in setting forth the history in detail, by the fact that no histories of the railway unions have been attempted by others. Those who were most directly concerned with the foundation of the societies had not the leisure for the task and now most of them have passed on. To present railway unionists, however, the history of their societies is of great interest and names which mean nothing or little to the general reader conjure up vivid memories to those, still living, who were young in the days of beginnings.

I have gained most of my information from an examination of minute books, correspondence, reports of inquiries and committees, and files of the unions. Many of these have been difficult to collect, for the early records were not regularly preserved. As it is some very valuable papers have been lost. The first minute book of the Auckland branch of the A.S.R.S. was preserved by a lucky incident. The editor of the "Railway Review" a few years ago borrowed it from the Auckland branch in order to find details in connection with the foundation of the Society. While the book was in Wellington the residence of the Auckland branch secretary was burnt down, and so perished many important old records. It is therefore important that some attempt at a history of the early days should have been made, before more gaps have been made in the evidence procurable.

The news-papers of the day have been used in an attempt to gain some understanding of contemporary public opinion on railway matters. The attitude of Parliament and of the Railway Department

has been studied in an examination of The Parliamentary Debates in the Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives and in the reports of interviews between the unions and the Management. Regulations under the different Acts have been used to verify figures.

Together with known works cited in the bibliography, I have made use of unpublished theses by Messrs. J.B. Salmond and E.C. Langford to provide a background of the management of the railways and of trade unionism in the Dominion during the period.

I have communicated with some of the older surviving unionists, Messrs. M.J. Mack ( General Secretary A.S.R.S. 1901-27) , R.J. McVilly ( general Secretary R.O.I. 1895-7, and later General Manager of Railways ), but, unfortunately, for health reasons, these have been unable to render much assistance. Mr. J.A. McCullough has kindly assisted in giving personal reminiscences of the early days of the Society in Canterbury, while the staffs of the Head Offices of the A.S.R.S. and of the R.O.I. in Wellington gave every assistance in allowing me to examine the old records. To all of these people my thanks are gratefully tendered.

Using the sources mentioned I have endeavoured to give an impartial account of the history of the organisation of the railway unions in the days of beginnings and of their place in the industrial and social life of the community.

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THE BRITISH AND NEW ZEALAND BACKGROUND.

Chapter I.

Trade unions, in England, gained a definite legal status in 1871. In that year, a bill was passed stating that no trade union was illegal, simply because in restraint of trade. Every union was.. entitled to be registered, provided that its rules were not expressly in contravention of criminal law. Registration, giving.. the union complete protection for its funds, left untouched the internal organisation and arrangements, and prevented its being sued, or proceeded against, in a court of law. On the other hand, it became an offence to watch, beset, follow, obstruct, threaten, molest or intimidate an employer or employee, and the Act of 1859, expressly legalising peaceful persuasion, was repealed. Trade unionists bitterly opposed the second part of the Act, which was carried in two sections. Then began a hard fought campaign to..... procure the repeal of the offending section, the Conservatives were supported in 1874, on the understanding that they would effect the unionists' desires, and, as a result, the Criminal Law Amendment Act was repealed in 1877. By the "Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act "definite and reasonable limits were set to the application.. of the law of conspiracy to trade disputes." The 1867 "Master..... and Servant" Act, the first legislative victory of Trade unionism, was replaced by the "Employers and Workman" Act, which made ..... these equal parties to a civil contract. Imprisonment for a breach. of contract was abolished, peaceful picketing was permitted and....

" to coerce or molest" were omitted, while " violence and to intimidate " were dealt with, as part of the general criminal code. Collective bargaining was legalised.

Thus success, at long last, crowned the struggle of trade unions for legal recognition. Until the beginning of the Capitalist Age, in the early fifteenth century, the condition of the worker had been protected by his position of security as a feudal villein or as a member, if a townsman, of the gild. Both master and man belonged to the craft gild, their relationship was a close personal one, the employee of today was, in the majority of cases, the master of tomorrow, the labour problem in the sense of a conflict of interest between employer and worker did not exist.

The economic revolution of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the result of many factors taken together, the geographical discoveries, the Reformation and the Renaissance, the growth of powerful nation states, changed all. State regulation crushed the gild, the wealthy trading middle class succeeded the old land-owning nobility as the possessors of political power, nation replaced city as the trading unit. In England the revolution from agricultural to pastoral farming, accompanied by an enclosure movement in the sixteenth century, led to insecurity and unemployment among the workers. Elizabeth in her "Statute of Artificers" provided that wages and the number of employed apprentices should be regulated by that indispensable Tudor official, the Justice of the Peace. As capitalism developed and labour conditions became less secure, workmen learnt to combine to give more force to their demands for such conditions as would provide a decent



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standard of life. Unions which supported the regulations, were ..... approved, but those demanding other conditions were illegal. The State did not brook a rival association within itself.

In England, in the eighteenth century, the strength and number of the trade unions increased greatly, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, which began to become a force after 1760. The ..... likelihood of becoming an employer became remote, for the cost of machinery and factory became prohibitive to the man without capital. The factory system intensifying the evils, crowding people together, stimulated the growth of unionism, by giving more reason for discontent and more opportunities for discussion and organisation. The old personal tie between master and man was lost, and now the country worker, thrown out of work by the new methods of farming and ..... manufacture, came to swell the more progressive population of the huge towns. To make matters worse the long accepted principle of state regulation went down before the new laissez-faire, individualist theories of Adam Smith. Accordingly, in the years 1813 and 1814 the Elizabethan legislation was repealed. State protection.... had been removed and yet the workers were not allowed to combine to guard their rights. Reform, in the days of the Terror, spelt ..... anarchy, and in 1799 the old acts forbidding trade combinations.... were summed up in a new act, which reflected the current belief in bargaining and competition, and virtually replaced state regulation by the individual control of the financial magnate.

The next fifty years saw a long struggle to gain legal recognition of the right of the worker to combine in order to .... secure a reasonable standard of life. During the period the work and influence<sup>h</sup> of such men as Francis Place, Robert Owen, the members.

of the "Junta", determined the position and policy of the trade unionists. Public interest in the position and claims of the trade unions resulted, in 1867, in the appointment of a Royal Commission, the majority report of which found that trade unions had not had a harmful influence and the minority report of which, approved of them unconditionally. In accordance with its pledge to pass sympathetic legislation, the new Liberal Ministry, in 1871, carried The Act which gave the unions a legal status.

After the failure of the Chartist movement which had had the support of many unionists, a new spirit to make the best of things, a strong desire for education and knowledge, had become characteristic of the trade union world in England. Prosperity, the new type of union, the model of which was the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the conciliatory attitude of the leaders of the trade union world, all contributed to the increasing influence of the union movement. New unions were organised, Trades and Labour Councils were formed. The first active efforts to organise the railway workers, commenced in 1865, but sectionalism led to defeat and the movement was forced underground. Trade union activity in all occupations was stirring and meetings held up and down the country resulted in the foundation of many railway societies. The circulars of the Railway ..... Companies were filled with mixed threats and cautions. However, the long hours worked by railway men inspired public sympathy in their cause, such as that expressed in one paper, and quoted by Mr. G. W. Alcock, "In this land of liberty, our invaluable railway employees may, work twelve, fourteen, sixteen or even eighteen hours in

twenty-four, with no half-hour for dinner .....but after presenting these and other grievances, individually, they must not have the.. liberty to unite or act in concert to obtain the liberty hitherto unattainable.....We say, above all, unite and you will stand,... divided you fall, and will deserve to do so." (1)

The average wage of the railway worker was between sixteen ..... shillings and seventeen shillings and sixpence per week. The great companies, equipped with espionage systems, sent out notices of dismissal to the leaders of the union movement. Outside sympathisers alone, were free from intimidation. 1867, the year of the Royal ..... Commission, was an important year in railway trade union organisation. (2) (3). Petitions asking for a ten-hour day, payment for overtime and one holiday a week were common. The next three years saw a decline largely due to sectionalism. (4). However, the Trade Union Act of 1871 and Howell's Bill, freeing unions from taxation of provident funds, assisted in the revival of the movement. The support of .... friends like Mr. T. Bass M. P. and Dr. P. Langley, the sympathy of public, resulted in December, 1871, in the Foundation of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, at a meeting in London. The objects of the society were to "promote a good and fair understanding..... between employers and employed; to prevent strikes; to protect and defend members against injustice; to secure ten hours for labour of a fair day and one day's extra pay for eight hours' overtime; the payment of the same rate for Sundays; to afford a ready means, by arbitration or otherwise, for the settlement of disputes; -----

(1) "Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism" G.W. Alcock p.15. (2) p

(2). P.17.

(3). P.19.

(4). P.29.

(6)

for granting temporary assistance to members; and to provide legal assistance when necessary; to make special grants to members who desired to emigrate and to found a superannuation fund for old and disabled members." (5) The foundation had been laid and railway unions were established all over England during the seventies.

What did those members who were assisted to emigrate to New Zealand find when they arrived in that newest colony of the South? New Zealand's economic welfare depends, even today, on the position of her primary products; England's, already in the nineteenth century depended on her manufactures, industry and commerce. Economic development has been rapid in the history of the white man in the Dominion, stone age Maori, passing sealer and whaler, squatter, small farmer, factory worker, each has dominated the action, for a time, on the stage of New Zealand history, but it is still true to say that New Zealand's is a predominantly rural population. It was not, then, to be expected that trade unionism should have been such a strong force in the New Zealand of 1870, as it was in the England of 1870. Trade unions become important when the evils of the factory system become intolerable, when industrialism diminishes the scope of the small business man. The huge industrial cities, the bad conditions of the old world were not present in the New Zealand of 1870. The colonists were concerned with carving out their farms, building their homes, protecting themselves from Maori attacks. Such trades as existed were the basic ones, tailoring, shoemaking, baking, carpentering, printing. Trade unions would be limited to these trades. When men have opportunities, themselves, of becoming employes they do not worry about trade unions. This has been true of New

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(5) G.W. Alcock "Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism" P.

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Zealand. Master and man worked side by side, disputes were settled personally, every man, in a country where opportunities abounded, was a potential employer of labour and, therefore, trade unionism was not strong. "Labour in New Zealand has been relatively mobile. It is characterised by adaptability, rather than specialised skill. Though economic opportunity has diminished, there is little doubt, that with a steadily expanding population and an absence of rigid class or educational distinctions, New Zealand has offered the capable and ambitious working man an unusual chance, as chances go, of "getting on in the world".<sup>(6)</sup>

Nevertheless, it has not been possible for the New Zealand employer to regard the subjection of labour as part of the order of nature. Labour was scarce, and the immigrant was, from the first,<sup>(7)</sup> ready to back his demand for higher wages by the strike. The very strength of the worker's position, made for economic independence. Many of the early settlers, who left "home" in the "hungry" forties, had participated in the trade union and chartist movements, disillusionment at the failure of which, had been the making of many an emigrant. These men were, therefore, wide awake to industrial evils. When the settlers arrived in the colony, conditions were difficult, for, owing to the complexity of the Maori land system and the hasty purchases of the New Zealand Company buyers, which led to long drawn-out law disputes, they were unable to get onto the land. Complaints were profuse, but the news-papers were forbidden to mention the bad conditions in view of the detrimental effect on immigration.

The first strike in New Zealand, occurred in 1841, when the men making the road along Wellington harbour, struck work.

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(6) "New Zealand" W. P. Morrell. p. 179. (7) p. 178.

In 1849, when the Otago Association refused to grant an eight-hour day, the settlers successfully struck work. Thus early employers and employed were in conflict in New Zealand. The settlers were determined not to allow the recurrence of old evils, from which they had fled, in the new land. Mr. H. H. Jackson, on the "Cuba", said that he hoped to grant his workmen an eight hour day, while on the "Philip Lang", the Reverend T. Burns promised a day of the same length, with pay of four shillings. <sup>(8)</sup> Elsewhere in the colony, the movement for the eight hour day was strong, and in the eighties received the support of the Trades and Labour Councils. The carpenters, as one would expect in a new settlement, were the pioneers of trade unionism in New Zealand. The Wellington Carpenters Association was formed in 1840.

Although labour was scarce, yet slow absorption, arising out of the difficulty of getting onto the land, brought discontent, especially in Otago during the years 1857 and 1858, when the settlers there, demanded employment on public works. Salvation came with the discovery of gold and boom years followed. Canterbury, whose economic life was not revolutionised as was Otago's, gained most real benefit, but even here a slump was suffered in 1868, although conditions were again alleviated with the discovery of new gold fields and better harvests. The years of difficulty saw the formation of trade unions, but these were seldom of long duration; for on the whole, times were good and, until the seventies, there was not any real problem of industrial unrest. There were two main types of early combinations; those formed by skilled craftsmen for temporary purposes and those formed by unskilled workers during periods of

(8) J.B. Salmond unpublished thesis "Labour Movement -1894" p. 6.

of distress and unemployment. With the organisation of the craft unions of the sixties, one of which, the Wellington Typographical Union, still survives, commenced the first period of New Zealand unionism. This was the trade societies period, when the unions clung to all the conservative traditions of British craft unionism,

The seventies saw great trade union activity in the colony, stimulated by the Public Works policy of Sir Julius Vogel. In 1870 unemployment was wide-spread, settlers demanded passages to Victoria, while in Canterbury, the Canterbury Working Men's Protection Society was formed to promote unionism among the working classes and to protect their interests. It was demanded that the true state of affairs should be made known in England, where conditions were bad and the colonising spirit dulled. Prices fell in New Zealand until 1871, but the gold rushes had led to an increase in population and the new comers had no patience with depression. At this time Vogel came forward with his borrowing scheme. Times were propitious, there was a world-wide boom following the Franco-Prussian war and higher prices, resulting from the demand for pastoral produce led to boom years in the colony until 1876. (9) As a result of Vogel's policy, the population increased, communications improved, towns extended, an artisan class, employed in the new factories, became important and the stage was set for a new period in New Zealand's history.

Until the seventies, the main problems had been those of foundation, government and Maori relations. Localism and separatism, just as in the New England colonies, had retarded the growth of a

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(9) Cambridge History of the British Empire" vol.7. part2. p.156.

national spirit, but the new immigrants were not influenced, to the same extent, by the local ties. The better communications provided under the public works policy, and the final abolition of the provincial Governments, all assisted in the growth of a national feeling.

A movement typical of the new national aspect of life in New Zealand, was the organisation, on a nation-wide basis of trade unions. Conditions more favourable to their growth were some results of the policy introduced into the country by Sir Julius Vogel.



(ii).

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND  
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UNTIL 1903.  
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Chapter 2.

The largest centres of population in the early days of European settlement in New Zealand were in the North. The first settlers lived at the Bay of Islands, the first capital was at Auckland and the earliest of the planned settlements were at Wellington and New Plymouth. In the late forties and earliest fifties Otago and Canterbury were founded. Communication between the different colonies was by sea, for the irregular nature of the country, and the straits dividing the islands, prevented land transport.

The early settlements were largely self-supporting; as in all new communities the main needs were the plain necessities of life and these could be produced on the spot. Temperatures did differ from north to south, but products were similar. As for goods from the outside world, these came to the colony at irregular intervals in vessels of private traders. Each settlement was supplied separately. Local separatism was so powerful a force and communication so bad, that letters quite often went to Australia or even England, en route from one province to another. (10).

Once the first difficulties of foundation were overcome, and especially after the land regulations of 1850 and the

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(10). W.P. Morrell. "Provincial System in New Zealand" p.13.

(12).

the gold discoveries of the sixties had increased population and expanded settlement, trade demands increased. The main method of overland communication was by coach. Adventurous and exciting as this method of travelling may have been, it could not compete either in utility or cheapness with transport by sea. Ports were numerous along the coasts, and Wellington, which was in a central position, became the capital in 1865. There was, however, no central point from which a railway system could radiate. Today, there are in two great main trunk lines, stretching from north to south of each of the larger islands, with lesser lines to east and west; a system necessitated by the nature of the country.

In 1863 a regular system of communications between the different settlements, was established. Two years later, the Weld Government made an agreement that Wellington should be the port of New Zealand port of call from Panama.<sup>(II)</sup> Thus sea communications were becoming regularised in the sixties. A telegraph system was also commenced.

In the same years the first railways in New Zealand were constructed. Owing to differences in the foundations of settlement, dissimilar political and financial interests and difficulties of communication, the natural form, and only possible form of Government in New Zealand, at the time, was a system of Provincial Government. The Province was the political and economic unit. As each settlement expanded, the more pressing became the need for better communication between port and hinterland.

In the South Island, where the benefits of prosperity

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(II)\* W. P. Morrell "Provincial System in New Zealand" p.139.

and increased population had followed the gold rushes, and where native conflicts were not important, railways were built by the Provincial Governments. The railway lines from Christchurch to its port, Lyttelton; from Invercargill to Bluff, were completed and lines from north to south were begun in Canterbury. With the opening of the first section of the line to Lyttelton, that from Christchurch to Ferrymead in 1863, the importance of Christchurch greatly increased. An account of the opening of this, the first railway in the colony, was given in the "Illustrated London News" March 5<sup>th</sup>. 1864. The ceremony was performed by the Superintendent, Mr. S. Moorhouse, and he, together with the other members of the Provincial Government, made the first trip down the line. Folks, many of whom had never seen a train, came from far and near and were given free rides on the trains, which ran up and down all day long. The contractors, Messrs. G Holmes and E. Richardson (later the Hon. E. Richardson C.M.G.) gave a dinner at which five hundred guests sat down. The Maoris also had their day. The same year the line from Dunedin to Invercargill was commenced. Four years later, both lines were opened to traffic. Construction was commenced by private contractors in 1870, on a line from Dunedin to Port Chalmers. All these lines were run effeciently and did good service.

In the North Island, railway construction did not progress to the same extent as in the South, for, as in all development in the North, it was retarded by Maori troubles. A road from Auckland to Drury was built and a start was made on a military road to Mercer. In 1865 the New Plymouth Council made proposals to the central government for a railway line between

Wellington and New Plymouth. Construction began in 1876 and the two towns were linked in 1878. In 1864, Mr. Hulke, in advocating an Auckland-Wellington railway, suggested the holding back of land along the lines as security on expenditure.

Despite the initiative of the Provincials Councils, it was inevitable that railway construction should come under the Central Government. Vogel's was a national policy, and, although at first, the Provinces directed the railway construction in their own boundaries, soon it was found necessary to place the construction under the National Ministry. In so small a country a uniform gauge was essential. Indeed the attitude of the Provincial Governments towards Vogel's schemes, resulted in 1876 in their abolition. The colony had outgrown its need for a federal form of government.

Times were difficult in 1870, when Vogel came forward with his great borrowing scheme. The dispirited settlers were ready for any constructive scheme, and the personality of the author of the policy was one inspiring confidence. Hopes ran high. The huge loans were to be spent in public works, especially road and rail construction. Railways were to be under the control of the new Public Works' Department, at the head of which, was the Minister of Public Works. Land along the lines was to be reserved for the nation, its increased value would balance expenditure on construction. This provision, unfortunately for the success of the scheme, was not carried out, such was the hostility of the Provincial Governments.

By the Railway Act of 1870, cited in the "Immigration and

Public Works Act" 1870, it was provided, under certain conditions, that the Government could both contract for the construction of the railways, mentioned in the schedule of the Act, and for the lease of these and railway equipment and property, to private persons or companies.

Most development took place in the South Island, where a comprehensive <sup>Survey</sup> was made. Until 1879, even including the years 1874 and 1875, when there was a shortage of labour in the colony, there was a general endeavour to carry out an ambitious programme of building. Not until 1879, when the depression began to deepen, was a general review of affairs held. Then, Sir John Hall's Government was forced to adopt a programme of rigid economy and an inquiry into railway construction revealed that there had been much extravagance. The engineer-in-chief of the South Island railways declared that the communications between Picton and Amberly, i.e., completing the South Island main trunk line, would be best served by road, and those with Westland best by sea. It has been left for the present Government to take steps to complete the South Island trunk line. By the "Government Railways Act" 1894 the railways came under a separate department, the Railway Department, and the Hon. J.A. Cadman became the first Minister of Railways. In 1870 there had been only forty-six miles of railways open to traffic; in July, 1900, after the Midland line of Canterbury had been acquired by the Government, two thousand one hundred and three lines were open and many branch lines had reached their present limits. The railways have been regarded more for their social importance than as strictly commercial enterprises.

Beside taking control of the construction of the railways, the Central Government took over the management of the completed lines. There was little foreign investment in New Zealand, which was too far distant from the great money markets of the world. In the colony itself, capital was invested in other concerns than the railways, the returns to which, in a new country, are long delayed. Some contracts for construction of the lines were, for financial reasons, given to private companies, eg. the Brogden contracts, but the Government would not allow these to own the constructed lines. Only in the darkest days of depression of the eighties, did the Government allow the Wellington- Manawatu and the Midland companies to build and run railways. The fact that the railways were state owned, and directly under the control of a Minister of State, affected the relations of the railway unions and the Railway Management.

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RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION DURING THE PERIOD.  
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Many have been the Royal commissions of inquiry into railway management in New Zealand. " In fact the history of the Railway Department, undoubtedly the subject of greatest experimentation in this direction, (civil administration) could be written in terms of Royal Commissions, their evidence and their findings ". (12)

The forms of railway administration in New Zealand, have been mainly of two types; direct ministerial control and control by commissions or boards, nominally responsible to the Minister,  
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(12) Langford E.C. thesis " Railway Administration in N.Z. " p. 25.

but possessed of full control of policy matters and administration generally.

The railways, under the Provincial Governments, were controlled by managers each responsible to the Provincial Council. In 1874 the sections controlled by the Provincials Councils were placed under the charge of a Commissioner, Mr. F.B. Passmore, a man of wide experience in other countries, who acted as General Manager. The provincial railways were, in 1876, following the abolition of the Provincial Governments, taken over by the Central Government. In order to secure uniformity of administration, Mr Passmore was appointed to take charge of all lines. <sup>(13)</sup> The Commission appointed to inquire into the position of the Civil Service in 1866 had stressed the need for highly capable officials, but in 1875, Mr. Passmore had to complain of the lack of suitable applicants for the positions of managers of the small lines.

During 1876 there were two Commissions appointed to inquire into railway matters. One had been set up to inquire into the affairs of the Auckland section, where money had been lost. This recommended the appointment of a General Manager for that province. The other inquiry was fairly exhaustive, its real object being to effect the pooling of the knowledge of those who managed the three systems in New Zealand, with a view to securing the unification of the whole under the central authority. The chief recommendations referred to the necessity for a uniform system of accounts and audit, a standard of forms throughout, and a final audit of accounts entirely

(13) Langford E.C. "Railway Administration in New Zealand" P. 26

independent of the railway authorities.

The following year there was another commission appointed to inquire into the question of classification and conditions of service. Among its recommendations were those stressing the necessity for the rendering and auditing of accounts, the benefits which would result from the employment of several contractors, instead of the Brogdens solely, the desirability of using New Zealand coals and of granting the railway managers discretionary powers. The General Manager should be trained as an executive official and not, as was then the case, as an engineer; there must be some incentive to progress. The railways must be made to pay.

Mr. Macandrew, the Minister, thereupon placed a Commissioner in charge of each island, with discretionary powers in detail and directly responsible to the Government through the Minister of Public Works. Mr. J. Lawson, who had had experience in England, became the Commissioner for the North Island, while Mr. Conyers, who had been manager of the Otago railways, became his colleague in the South.

The Commissioners of the depression year 1880, found that the working lines did not return half of the interest on cost. One of the chief reasons for such an undesirable state of affairs was that railways had been constructed in districts where settlement was too sparse. The management by the Minister was not beneficial, in that political pressure on him militated against economical control. A board, on the lines of a Board of Directors of an English Railway Company, would be preferable. A second Commission of the same year had for its object "to reconstitute and economise, and it, literally, stamped its way



(19).

through its investigations, towards the goal it had set out to attain".<sup>(14)</sup> Recommendations were drastic,,criticism of the South Island section being especially severe. In Nelson the Commissioners found a railway store-keeper with £160 a year, but he had no stores and no office. The South Island Commissioner had money invested in a firm contracting with the Department, he and other officers were not given an opportunity of defending themselves, before the report was published in the news-papers and they resigned. The service was purged of many, who regarded a government post as a paternal endowment. A twelve and a half percent reduction in wages was recommended, control should be in the hands of a General Manager, rather <sup>Than</sup> in the hands of Commissioners, services should be paid for at market value and leaders and organisers should rise from the ranks.

Accordingly, Mr. Maxwell was appointed General Manager in control of the railways, with headquarters at Wellington. There was, at the same time, an amalgamation of several of the sectional departments, such as Stores and Accounts, with a view to securing efficiency of control. Two, instead of four, District Managers were placed in the Hurunui-Bluff section and one Locomotive Superintendent was appointed for the whole section. This arrangement, alone, resulted in a saving of £5000 a year, in salaries.

By 1889 the staff had been classified and a complete system of returns, furnishing statistic information, had been established. Yet adverse criticism of the railways increased.

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(14). E.C. Langford, unpublished thesis "Railway Administration"

Times were bad. The prevailing spirit of individualism demanded that the railways should pay. Thus the management of the railways was handed over to business men, independent of political influence. In 1889 three Railway Commissioners, Messrs. Maxwell, W. Hannay and James Mc. Kerrow (chief) were appointed with powers similar, in all respects, to those of Railway Directors in England. Later, Messrs. T. Ronayne and J. L. Scott replaced Messrs Mc. Kerrow and Hannay, who retired. The independence of the Commissioners led to a conflict with the new Liberal-Labour Government. "They applied purely commercial tests in their analysis of the position and they were inclined to disregard the social advantages at which Government policy aimed". Richard John Seddon (15) claimed that the Commissioners had been appointed for a term and in 1894, he introduced a Railway Act which terminated their engagement and effected the separation of the railways from the Public Works Department, by setting up a new Railways Department. The Hon. J. A. Cadman became Minister of Railways and Mr. Ronayne General Manager. The railway staff shared in the maternal legislation of the Government, which passed Classification and Superannuation Bills and provided Appeal Boards.

In 1900 Sir Joseph Ward became Minister of Railways, an appointment popular with the staff. He made administrative changes, appointing Traffic Superintendants for each island. There was an outdoor function and they were possessed of little discretionary power, with the result that, in a few years they had become a hindrance to efficient despatch of business.

By 1903 several attempts had been made to solve the question of efficient management. Each influenced the position

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(15) E. C. Lengford infra p. 47.

of the staff and the relations of their unions with the Management. Unions in a department of state were a new phenomenon. The fact that, almost from the beginning, the railways have been under the one control and conditions have, therefore, been uniform, has simplified the task of union organisation among the staff. In England and The United States of America, where the railways are owned by private concerns and conditions differ according to the management of each, it has been much more difficult to organise unions and to secure for these, when organised, like consideration and treatment.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY AND RAILWAY UNIONS  
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BEFORE 1886.  
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Chapter III.

Vogel's policy of immigration and public works led to an increase in population from 248,000, in 1870, to 455,000, in 1880. The number of urban dwellers became by no means negligible, and manufactures became important. Mr. Holloway, an agent of Arch's English National Agricultural Labourers Association, while visiting New Zealand, was impressed by her prosperity and the advantages she offered for settlers. As a result of such reports some members of the Association emigrated to the colony. The years from 1871 to 1876, were years of prosperity in New Zealand. After 1871, however, the large number of artisans and labourers in the colony and the building of big factories, combined to develop a real problem of industrial unrest. Strikes, during these years were frequent, but short in duration. The workers were usually successful in securing better wages and thereby shared the advantages of prosperity. Trade societies boomed, unions were organised in almost every trade, as well as among the unskilled labourers of the towns.

The movement was, however, shortlived. Once depression darkened economic prospects, unionism declined. "Forced development, proceeding too rapidly, is both wasteful in itself and  
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productive of a following depression".

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(16). Cambridge History of the British Empire. Vol. P. 160.

Prosperity and boom conditions led to the establishment of many industries, for which the colony was not ready, while, in frenzied speculation, Vogel's safeguards were swept away. The most potent reason for the bad effect of his policy was the drop in prices, after Germany had adopted the gold standard. <sup>(17)</sup> Depression in New Zealand followed the fall in the value of gold exported and the low wool prices of the late seventies and the eighties. Trade being in such a state, those unions which survived, realising the futility of strikes, concentrated their efforts in an attempt to prevent a fall in wages, the lengthening of the hours of labour, causing sweating conditions, and the flooding of the labour market with boy labour.

Unemployment and the crowding of large numbers of people in small towns led to poverty and discontent. Agitation and meetings demanding employment, increased, for the immigrants felt that they had been brought to the colony on false pretences. The eighties, especially after the fall of the Vogel-Stout Ministry, 1887, saw an exodus of workers from the colony to Victoria and New South Wales, where boom conditions prevailed. <sup>(18)</sup> 1879 was a dreadful year. Soup kitchens and other relief measures were the order of the day. A Christchurch manifesto of the day declared " We went work, not soup ". <sup>(19)</sup> In the eighties, New Zealand paid for the speculation and borrowing of the seventies. In 1880 the unemployed drew up a petition, to be sent to the President of U.S.A asking for a free passage there.

Three years later a Commission was appointed to inquire into the

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(17) "Cambridge History of the British Empire" vol.7.P.157

(19) Drummond.J. "Life and Work of R.J.Seddon" P.31.

cause of unemployment. Thinking men were naturally concerned with emigration from the colony, of mechanics, who had been brought out to New Zealand at great expense. Towns were overbuilt, the building trade was paralysed and yet no serious diminution of expenditure had been made on public works. Seasons were bad, freights heavy and the dearth of money hampered commerce, local industries and agriculture. Among the recommendations of the Commissioners were those advocating the settlement of labourers on the land in village settlements and the encouragement of local industry. The possession of huge tracts of land by wealthy owners prevented close settlement and land-hungry men swelled the dissatisfied population of the towns. Rolleston, with the support of the small farmer and the town worker, who combined against the large landowner, was enabled to introduce his lease system. The Commissioners had found that those wanting employment were up to the standard in ability, industry and sobriety .

Conditions did not improve. In 1884 the Otago Trade and Labour Council petitioned against further immigration, the next year free passages were asked of the Victorian Government, the passage money to be paid in instalments. Among other petitions, was a proposed one to Queen Victoria, in her Jubilee year, in which the hope was expressed that she should interfere on behalf of her starving people of New Zealand.

( 20 )

Despite unemployment and depression, the eighties saw great economic expansion, which was facilitated by the public works of the seventies. Rapid development in the pastoral industries

followed the inventions of refrigeration and the centrifugal separator. A strong movement for protection, allied with the trade union movement, sprang up in the eighties.

The retrenchment of the Civil Service and the salary reductions carried out by the Government of Sir John Hall, 1881, had affected all the workers. The strikes of the seventies had been isolated, but in the next decade the spirit of cooperation among different trades became strong. Vogel's development of communications, the abolition of the Provinces, in 1876, and the increased population had all helped to break the spirit of local separatism. This weakening of local ties was reflected in trade union organisation. Unions had survived only where the tradition of combination was strongest and where the evil conditions drove home the need of co-operation. Trades and Labour Councils were organised in Auckland in 1876, in 1881 in Dunedin and later in Wellington and Christchurch. These Councils took an active interest in politics and the Parliamentary Committee, established in 1881, contributed many suggestions to W. P. Reeves on labour legislation, social, political and educational reform.

The Otago Trades and Labour Council was responsible for the calling of the first New Zealand Trades and Labour Congress, which met in Dunedin, in January 1885. Forty delegates, representing thirty societies, attended, one of the Vice-Presidents being Mr. E. Wilson, a representative of the railway Engine-drivers and Firemen's Association. Discussion centred round technical education, the possibility of sweating, the representation of labour in Parliament, the conditions of railway workers and the need for Factory Acts. The Premier, an enthusiast for craft unions

addressed the Congress. A further Congress was held in 1886 and , although conditions were bad, it was well attended. However the movement was weakened by the divergent aims of the members and their divided allegiance to Liberal Associations and trade unions and by the lack of any effective executive machinery.

On the whole, one may say that, during the eighties, New Zealand trade unions were weak in organisation and fighting power but discussion was active. Some industrial legislation was carried eg Factory Act 1873, Wages Acts 1872, Act for the Registration of Trade Unions 1878, and the first Employers' Liability Act 1882. Since unions were not strong and large factories relatively few, the employers were able, successfully, to resist the making of an effective code of factory legislation, especially as the champion of factory legislation, Mr. J. B. Bradshaw, was willing to sacrifice much in return for a fifteen per cent protective duty.

Besides the movement for Trades and Labour Councils, there was a tendency to link up with Australian labour organisations. At an Australian Labour Congress, held in Sidney in 1879, New Zealand was represented by proxy and approved measures in favour of the eight- hour working day and the legalisation of trade unions. New Zealanders of the time were influenced by the Utopian socialism of Edward Bellamy and by the theories of Henry George. The way was being prepared by co-operation and by a study of contemporary socialist thought, for the great unionist awakening of 1889 and 1890 in New Zealand. As yet, the New Zealand worker was the supporter of the Liberal-Labour party, which was,



to him, the instrument of a practical programme and not the embodiment of a principle or faith. (21)

Sir John Hall was obliged to enforce the strictest economy in government departments. At the same time government employees felt all the disadvantages of slump conditions. It is, therefore, not surprising that strikes took place and temporary unions of railway workers were formed in the seventies and eighties. These societies were local and sectional; railwaymen were divided among themselves. The records of these early associations have been lost. 1871 was a most important year in the history of English trade unionism in general and of railway trade unionism in particular. Many of those employed in constructing and working the New Zealand railways were influenced by their experiences and by the movements "at home". The model for the New Zealand railway societies was the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in England.

In February, 1874, the Canterbury Railway Servants' Benefit Society was formed in Christchurch and, in May of the same year, an Engine-Drivers' and Firemen's Association. So early was sectionalism present as a force.

In 1876 there was a strike of nearly all the Christchurch railwaymen on the question of overtime. The men declared that the eight-hour day was at stake, for the Government intended to enforce a ten hour day. On April 11<sup>th</sup>. 1876, a deputation of Messrs. York, Whitaker, Burke, Archibald and Lennie, representing the employees of the Christchurch Railway station, waited on members of the Provincial Government on the question of overtime.

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During the busy grain season the men had been called upon to work four or five hours overtime per day, without payment for this work. The members of the Government were astonished at the position and promised that an inquiry should be made. The men did not want overtime, even if paid for, but were willing to work longer hours on extra special occasions so long as this was not made a practice. The reply of the Provincial Government to the men's demands was given on April the twentieth. The fair spirit of the men was appreciated, but as no overtime wage was paid on General Government lines and Otago lines, it was impossible to pay such on the Canterbury lines. The men should work, if required, the Government had no desire to take an unfair advantage. "When circumstances arise necessitating overtime, say over ten hours a day, a general system of relays will be adopted in the case of all employees, where the occasion requires it. Whatever time is made beyond ten hours will be allowed next morning. Also, while casual employment allows it, no extra hand is to make more than eight hours a day. This provision will equalise the work and increase the number of trained men."

The Benefit Society, formed to protect the men's interests, called a meeting of railwaymen, where it was decided to call a strike against this attempt to take away the eight hour day, which they enjoyed under the regulations of February 1875. It was clearly intended that they should have to work ten hours, if necessary, at busy times; traffic was increasing and therefore ten hours would become the rule. On April the twenty-fifth, two hundred railwaymen struck work.

The Traffic Manager had been informed of the projected strike, and as enginemen, all clerks except one, and all labourers, except two, were at work; trains on the first day were run. The Lyttelton men did not strike, as they received nine shillings for eight hours work and two shillings an hour for overtime, paid by the shipping interests. Enginemen, whose demands were met by the Government, did not strike for they belonged to a National Association and could not act independantly. They were in sympathy with the strikers and were not willing to work with unskilled volunteers. The strike continued next day and much damage was done to goods, left uncovered, overnight, by rain. Few trains ran after mid-day.

Mr. G Stead, whose firm had been adversely affected by the strike, interviewed the men and persuaded them to draw up a list of proposals. He then arranged for a deputation of the men to meet the Provincial Superintendant, the Provincial Secretary and the Minister of Public Works. Mr. Stead urged both sides to forget the "pros and cons" for the strike and submitted the men's proposals. (1) All the men were agreeable to return to their work on the understanding that all on strike should be allowed to return to their respective stations (2) Forty eight hours was to be a week's work and extra hours were to be paid for pro-rata. (3) The men were willing to forego the demand for back overtime (4) Heads of Departments were willing, in emergency, to work for an hour or so, when absolutely necessary, without making a demand for overtime rates, but this was not to be demanded as a right. Mr. Allard, Secretary of the Railway Benefit Society, explained the demands of the men. Clause (1) was struck out.

The demands were granted and all men were allowed to return to their work, no discrimination being made in relation to the strikers. A meeting of railway servants in the evening, endorsed the action of the deputation and passed votes of thanks to the Superintendent, to the engine-drivers and firemen for their help.

The Christchurch "Press" of April, 27<sup>th</sup>. commented on the satisfactory settlement, at the same time remarking on the inconveniences arising from the strike. The travellers who left Timaru (100 miles from Christchurch) at seven o'clock on Wednesday morning, did not reach their destination until twelve hours later. There had been a delay of five hours, in pouring rain, at Rangitata, where the engine-drivers changed over, for the drivers refused to take the trains on. There had been no telegraph and it was difficult to inform Christchurch. Mails had been delayed, many trains which had come into town for the weekly market did not return at night. One stranded farmer was so incensed that he threatened to take legal action against the Government, and "to go in for heavy damages for breach of contract" (22)

On August 10<sup>th</sup>. 1877, in the "Lyttelton Times" there appeared a favourable report on the work of the Railway Servants' Mutual Benefit Society. This had been in existence for only two years, during which time, it had been productive of much good. The weekly

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(22) "The Press" stated "and while referring to the matter, we cannot but think it a great pity that all stations are not connected by telrgraph, not only with each other, but also with Christchurch." April 27<sup>th</sup>. 1876.

contribution of members was sixpence, if a member was injured on the railway he received from the funds twenty shillings a week, for six months and ten shillings a week for the following six months. If he died, his representatives received twenty pounds.

" The objects of the Society are so thoroughly good that it deserves the warmest support. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that there should be a rival society, the Engine-drivers and Firemen's Society, but possibly, ere long, the two may be amalgamated". In August, steps were taken to effect this amalgamation, but the object was not achieved.

In December, 1877, railway employees were asked to sign a form, promising obedience to the rules and regulations of the service, and to accept eight shillings a day, such a rate to include all the value of services rendered for overtime and Sunday work.

In 1878, another proposal was vainly made to amalgamate the Dunedin and Christchurch Railway Benefit Societies, both rivals to the Society established by the Government. Times were difficult and sectionalism triumphed.

In July of the next year one hundred and fifty railway employees at Carterton, in the North Island, struck work, in a vain protest against a proposed reduction in wages.

1876 had been the last year of boom conditions and Canterbury railway men had succeeded in gaining an eight hour day. In 1880, despite temporary concerted action between Dunedin and Canterbury men failure attended a protest against a proposed reduction of wages. On August 27<sup>th</sup>, all the men employed in the Permanent Way and Way and Works departments of the railways,

were officially notified that, henceforth, they would be working under a ten per cent reduction in wages. The letter of Mr. Conyers (Commissioner for the South Island) of August 27<sup>th</sup>, to the Traffic Manager, at Christchurch, announced that the reduction should take effect from August 1<sup>st</sup>, and that the reduction was enforced in the case of every Government employee. Later, the Minister of Public Works declared that, as notice had not been given, the reduction would be deferred, in the case of the wages men, but the deduction must be made in all salaries, if these had been paid, the ten per cent must be refunded. The position was anomalous, for a tally clerk, salaried, receiving eight shillings a day would be reduced while his assistant, receiving eight shillings wage, would not.

The men were annoyed at the lack of due notice, and a mass meeting of railwaymen was held, in Christchurch, on Sunday morning, August 28<sup>th</sup>. A deputation from Dunedin attended and it was resolved that a deputation of railwaymen wait on the heads of departments, who should declare that, unless the notice of reduction was not withdrawn and a reply to the men given in forty eight hours, the men would cease work. Dunedin was informed of this action but at a meeting there, on August 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Conyers had assured the men that an all round reduction was not intended. Instead of a reduction of wages men, there would be a revision of the scale of wages on an equitable and practical system. The Christchurch Committee decided that no reliance could be placed on this assurance and that only a statement from the Minister could inspire confidence.

In the "Lyttelton Times" of September 2<sup>d</sup>, a comparison

of railway wages and private rates for similar work was given. Men working for Messrs. Talbot and Mc. Clatchie, stevedores, of Lyttelton, had struck work on August 24<sup>th</sup>. because their wages had been reduced from twelve shillings to ten shillings for an eight hour day. Railwaymen, doing similar work and on duty for longer hours, especially in the busy season, were paid only eight shillings.

The Christchurch men stressed the necessity for consulting public convenience before taking action, and decided to take no action in reference to the suspension of Mr. E. Wilson, one of the Dunedin delegates. Although Dunedin was quiescent, the Canterbury men decided to go ahead on their own and it was resolved that if the notice of reduction was not withdrawn, as demanded, they would cease work on the night of September 2<sup>nd</sup>. An official communication declared that the agitation had been the result of a misunderstanding as to the date of operation of the reduction and that the reduction, which was to take effect after a full week from the time when notice was given, was not a uniform ten per cent, but one which assimilated the rates for Government work to those prevailing outside and which was imposed on the Management by Parliament. The men, therefore, decided to postpone action. Particulars of the new rates, having been approved by the Minister, Mr. Oliver, then were made known to the officers. At Dunedin, a meeting of railwaymen was unanimous in approval of a strike against reduction, but decided to postpone action until the new scale was known. Mr. Fish, a Member of the House of Representatives, wrote "I hope the good sense of the men will prevent a strike, because others are ready to take their

places".

The new regulations were issued, by which employees of the different branches were classified, the minimum and maximum rate of pay for each class being fixed. Promotion from one class to another was to depend on ability, good conduct and length of service.

When the railwaymen first expressed their opposition to any reduction, a leader writer in the "Lyttelton Times" of September 2<sup>nd</sup>. had expressed the hope that the matter would not become a political one. It was necessary to remember that the wages of railwaymen must be regulated by the labour market and not vice-versa. Opinion differed as to whether the railway wages were better or worse than private wages, but it was well to remember that many railway workers were highly skilled and no wage was paid for overtime. When the new rates were made known the leader writer considered that no great reduction had been made, the rates were, on the whole, fair, although there were some injustices and the Otago men would suffer a big reduction. "Speaking generally, the regulations make railway conditions preferable to private ones."

The Canterbury employees decided to examine the new scale; feeling was against a strike. It was felt that the Otago men had thrust aside the previous offer of co-operation, which they now desired, because they were pinched. Allusion was made to the tactlessness of the Department in sending out a provocative notice of reduction. Some proposals for the improvement of the rates were submitted.

In Dunedin, the regulations were opposed because they



would result in a large reduction in wages and tended to set class against class. Some few favoured trying out the regulations. When a vote was taken on September 9<sup>th</sup>, seventy-five per cent favoured striking, but there was little organisation and much division. In Christchurch, also, the movement died away. The new regulations were given a chance to prove themselves. There had been an effort at co-operation; a scale of wages for the whole South Island had been introduced.

In 1881 a ten per cent reduction was made in the wages of all civil servants, a reduction to which there was much opposition. A strike had been threatened at the time of the reduction, but had not taken place for the men realised the serious position of affairs in the colony. In some departments of the railways the wages had been restored. The Addington Workshops men had appealed for a similar return. The Government had considered that the appeal was in the nature of a threat and would not do anything until the appeal was more respectfully worded. The men declared that their requests had been ignored and sixty-seven artisans struck work on September 24<sup>th</sup> 1881. They had submitted to the new classification, just as the other railway employees had, it was only right that all, and not only some, of the men should receive a restoration. The average reduction in the locomotive shop had been 9%. Many of the men had left the service and received higher wages and many more intended to leave the colony, rather than submit to the reduction. Pay in America for similar work, for which the New Zealander received ten shillings a day was from twelve and sixpence to fourteen shillings and seven pence a day. Deputations of the

strikers waited on the Christchurch City Council, the Sydenham Borough Council and Messrs R. J. Seddon and S. P. Andrews, M. P. The Borough Councillors and the Members felt that the men had a just grievance and deplored the necessity of their emigration from the colony.

Sir John Hall telegraphed that the railway wages were as good as outside ones, labour was plentiful and no compromise would be entertained. The strikers maintained that those who had taken their places in the shops were not skilled men, some were even fishermen. The Honourable Mr. E. Richardson, felt that the men had been wrong in striking, but Mr Andrews thought that the authorities could have prevented the strike, which was largely the result of the men's fear of victimisation, of which there had recently been examples at Addington.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of September a deputation of the strikers waited on the General Manager of Railways, Mr. Maxwell, who declared that he was unable to recommend any alteration of wages to the Government. A big public meeting, at which the Mayor of the city presided, was held on October the 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Earnshaw, for the men, declared that at the time of the reduction Mr. A. Smith, Locomotive Superintendant, Christchurch, had promised that this would not be more than six per cent, instead of which the reduction had been nine per cent. The men favoured an inquiry.

The "Lyttelton Times" declared the already complex problem of settling railway wages, as complicated in the case, in that, at the time of the reduction, there was also a new classification. The confusion in the men's minds was the just result of an unfair reduction in wages.

The strikers met Sir John Hall, on the tenth, and discussed the position. Fortunately the political element was lacking. The Premier reminded the men that their notices had been issued, after a warning had been given that a respectful petition would be forwarded to the Government, and after they had been asked not to leave, since there were so many ready to step into their places. The men had made a mistake. The fact that it had been so easy to replace them, favoured the Government's view of the wage question. The men could rejoin the service, when vacancies occurred. Many of the men regretted their act and some left the colony.

Public interest had been a feature in the strike, times were very difficult and low wages were a matter that affected all. The failure of the men was typical of many another strike of the dark days of depression.

All over the colony arguments were in progress over the questions of new lines and tariff rates. Railway affairs were of great interest. This was especially the case, when, in July, Mr. Smith, the member of the House of Representatives for Waipawa, moved an amendment to the resolution that the House adjourn; that, as the ten per cent reduction had been removed from civil servants, the platelayers on the railways and the wages men of the Permanent Way department receive a like restoration. The Government took this as a motion of no confidence, and, though Mr. Smith stated that he wanted the matter to be non-party, he was not permitted to withdraw his amendment. Many members supported the amendment on the grounds of justice to the platelayers, whose conditions were very hard. The general feeling among the supporters of the motion, who included R. J. Seddon and Sir G.

Grey, was that any rise in wages was only due and that the Government was stupid to make the matter one of no confidence. Sir John Hall said that when the reduction was made there had been three rates of wages, one at Auckland, one in the southern part of the North Island and one in the South Island. Consideration of wages was necessary, but the matter should not be pressed until the Government brought down proposals. Major Atkinson declared "The question was not the justice of the case under discussion, but whether the House was to interfere in a way which must destroy all discipline by its Executive Government... members should stand together and resist the pressure of any class of public servants." Another Government member opposed the amendment, because it was not the affair of the Opposition to interfere in the question of wages in the Public Service. The opponents of the motion argued that there must be no favouritism of any class of public servants, and that there must be no outside political interference in departmental matters.

The Government was forced to restore wages, a restoration which took effect on July the 21<sup>st</sup>. 1882.

A correspondent to the "Lyttelton Times" on July the 26<sup>th</sup> 1882, wrote "After making a careful inquiry, I find it a common occurrence for loco. men to be on duty from thirteen to thirty hours in one spell... You will find that these men used every legitimate means to get these long hours and a hundred other hardships alleviated, but have signally failed to obtain redress." A circular from the railway Head Office, stated that all railwaymen should, if practicable, work eight hours a day, but engine men were to work ten hours a day.

Railways were of great interest to the New Zealanders of the day and their management by the State a novel one and one which occasioned much adverse criticism. The controllers of newspapers so Varying in opinion, as the "Otago Daily Times", Dunedin and the "Lyttelton Times", Christchurch, were agreed <sup>that</sup> the cause of all evils was state control. There was too much temptation for politicians to interfere on behalf of the employees, whose conditions were made the subject of Parliamentary debate, instead of being purely departmental business.

The struggle in Dunedin, in the last three months of 1882, clarified issues. A railway Engine-drivers' and Firemen's Association had been formed to protect the interests of locomotive men and providing sick and death benefits. During the previous session of Parliament, a committee had inquired into certain grievances in connection with the working of the railways. This had recommended that a tribunal of competent and impartial persons should go into the matter. Grievances among the men were many and Mr. Alison Smith, the Locomotive Superintendant of the South Island, had issued a circular to the effect that, if the person addressed had any individual grievance unredressed, he was to forward it to Mr. Smith in writing, as a preliminary to the complaint being placed before the General Manager for his consideration. Any letters were to be handed in to the Locomotive Foremen, at the different centres, in time to reach Mr. Smith, not later than the 7<sup>th</sup>. October. "The Southland News" October 10<sup>th</sup> declared that the number of men who sent in their grievances, would depend on the number of "born fools in the Service", for men, who expressed dissatisfaction, would be, as they had been

in the past, dismissed. "At present, judged by the testimony of large numbers of the employees, the service is in a state of unwholesome ferment, and will continue so until such reforms have been made as will satisfy the men that if they do their duty they will get fair play."

The Engine-drivers' and Fifemen's Association sent a letter to Mr. Smith, asking that the time for sending in grievances be extended until after the Inquiry, promised during the session, had been held. No notice had been taken of grievances, which had been sent in. The letter was signed by the President, Thomas Bracken, an M.P. and the Chairman, Richard Dale. The former was not a railway servant, but many of his constituents were. He was one of the best known of early New Zealand poets and took a keen interest in the problem of the workers. Richard Dale was an engine-driver of many years standing in the Otago section. "The Oamaru Mail" of October the 10<sup>th</sup>, declared that there was no rule forcing the men to bring their grievances before the officials, especially before any set date. Mr. Smith had consulted his own convenience in setting the date for the receipt of complaints, since he was going on leave.

Mr. Maxwell, in Mr. Smith's absence, replied to the demand of Mr. Bracken "The intervention in the working of the Railway Department by persons who are neither responsible for the efficiency and economy of the service nor the safety of the public could not fail to be a grave evil, and the dictation of a Society, which would make the convenience and interest of the public secondary to that of the employees, would not fail to cause public dissatisfaction. You will doubtless recognise, under

these circumstances, the inadvisability of my complying with the request." Mr. Bracken regretted that it had been necessary to interfere in railway affairs, but " At the same time, things have arrived at that pass, where a little outside intervention is absolutely necessary, unless we wish to see a system of petty tyranny established, which must eventually result in the complete disorganisation of the department. The trite old adage that where there is "much smoke there is sure to be a fire" was never better exemplified than in the present management of our railways".

Newspapers, like the "Otago Daily News", the "Evening Star" of Dunedin, "The Timaru Herald," blamed the attitude of the Association and upheld the departmental attitude. The whole matter was a good illustration of the evils arising from the state ownership of the railways. Political interference would result in anarchy and a "spoils system" comparable to that of the U. S. A. Too much had been made, in Parliament, of the terrible conditions of the railway servants, whose wages gave no cause for complaint. The Department could not allow an outside Inquiry, which would upset discipline. It would be impossible to manage the service, if intervention, such as Mr. Bracken's, were allowed and if the attitude of the Association was encouraged.

A meeting, under the chairmanship of the Mayor, was held in Oamaru, on the 24<sup>th</sup>. of October, the object being to form a branch of the Dunedin Trades and Labour Council. The speaker, referred, in passing, to the dismissal of four members of the Association, for no good reason. "The fact was that a society had been established some time since, similar to societies long existing in England and America, and these men were members of it,

They had not been told that they must not belong to a trade union but had been turned adrift from the service with no explanation."

The "Oamaru Mail" of October the 25<sup>th</sup>. gave an account of the dismissed men and criticised the "oppression" of the Department. "Dale, the engine-driver who was a fortnight ago summarily dismissed, had been a faithful servant of the service and, therefore, of the public, for seventeen years. He "fired" the first engine that arrived in Invercargill and drove the second. He was selected by Mr. Conyers, for the Belclutha line and afterwards placed on charge of the express running between Invercargill and Oamaru". Beside him "Charles Stewart has been turned into the streets. He was the first fireman and the second engine-driver in Otago and was, afterwards, Locomotive Foreman, a position he held for six years. He was never once reported for misdemeanour of any kind, whatever." "The third victim is W. Ames, a fireman whose only sin is that he is an Irishman, and has occasionally shocked the straight-laced and exacting, Loco. Foreman, by his native wit. The fourth is J. Minn, who committed the unpardonable offence of expressing to the Loco. Foreman's son, the opinion that the engine-drivers and fire-men were acting justifiably in representing their grievances to higher powers, than those in the Department"

"The "Otago Daily Times" of October the 30<sup>th</sup>; printed the minutes of a meeting of the Engine-drivers' and Firemen's Association. held on the second of the month. Among the resolutions were the following; that time for answering the September circular be extended until after the holding of the Inquiry, that no



individual grievance be sent in, that Mr. Dale obtain legal advice re. his dismissal from the service, that "if any locomotive employ~~ee~~ get dismissed through being a member of, or taking an active part in the Association, the branch of which the said employee is a member, being convinced of this, that immediate action be at once taken to stay off work." Mr. Bracken was to be thanked for accepting the office of President, and was to be asked to inquire if, and when, an Inquiry was to be held and to find out if delegates might procure leave of absence to attend a general meeting of the Association. At this meeting Messrs. C. Stewart, J. Minn and W. Ames played prominent parts.

The publication of these minutes was a signal for an attack, by its opponents, on the Association. The "Otago Daily Times" of November the first, declared that this was rank disobedience "no hole in the corner society shall be allowed to dictate to officers, who are responsible for the efficient control of the Department. It will come to this, bye and bye, that all employees of the state will have to be deprived of the vote and no longer be able to wield their political influence against their employers, to put money into their own pockets" When Mr. Bracken defended his attitude by the fact that a similar society in Victoria had, for its President, the Minister of Railways, and that no rule would in any way, operate to the detriment of the service, the newspaper retorted that the officers had no need of the help of such a society in running the service, and that the Victorian Society must be different or the Minister would not be its President. The minutes were nothing more nor less than an attempt to inspire terror, declared a leader writer of the "Timaru Herald"

If the Association, as it desired, were allowed to become the channel for the grievances of the men, all discipline would be a fiction."The Association, in short, constitutes nothing more nor less than a trade union in a public department, which is a thing we never heard of before... No such organisation must be allowed to exist within the ranks of the Public Service. The Dunedin "Evening Star "November the 8<sup>th</sup>. declared that the object of the Association is to be a happy little Republic wher Jack is as good, or rather better, than his master"and that the men would consult only themselves and rule by terror.

The official point of view can be gleaned from an examination of the official correspondence. A telegram was sent on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. October from Mr. Maxwell to Mr. Smith, informing him that Mr. Plackmore, Locomotive Foreman, Dunedin, had been instructed to pay off "C. Stewart, W. Ames and J. Minn as their services are no longer required, giving a fortnight's pay in lieu of notice." The three men demanded the reason for their dismissal, but were informed that Mr. Plackmore had not been informed. On the sixth all three wrote apologies for their actions and promised, if reinstated, not to act in a like manner again. This, the apology of Stewart, is typical, "I sincerely regret that I, who having formerly held a similar position, knew the difficulty under which officers of the department labour, should have counselled and assisted in proceedings which were subversive to the discipline of the Department and I promise, on my word of honour, never again to act in such a way, if you will overlook my folly and reappoint me to the same position in the Government

service" On the seventh, Mr. Maxwell wrote to Mr. Plackmore, "re. dismissed drivers am pleased to learn that they are disposed to acknowledge their error They cannot expect to go unreprimanded after their act. Driver Ames may be allowed to come back, losing pay during absence and twelve months seniority Fireman Minn the same terms; when they assent. It must be posted that, having been dismissed for offences specified in the General Manager's notice of the 16<sup>th</sup>. October, they are allowed to resume their duties upon their expressing regret and undertaking to abstain from such irregularities in the future and that they lose one year's seniority. Driver Stewart having been a foreman and having had special favour shown him during the past two years, has by his conduct, in face of such treatment, forfeited all claim to further indulgence and we cannot, again, trust him.... You will post copy of this as a reply to his request to be reinstated." On the thirteenth, Mr. Plackmore wrote to Mr. Smith that Ames and Minn accepted the terms and would start work the following day. Next day Mr. Maxwell wrote that he would reconsider Mr. Stewart's case and "re. the others you dont appear to have got my previous telegram in which I have stated that we had better leave them alone now, having so far shown up the Society and stopped the agitations." On the fifteenth Mr. Maxwell told Mr. Smith to "take on Stewart again at eleven shillings".

Obviously the men had been dismissed for their participation in the activities of the Association. Undoubtedly the phenomenon was a new one; trade unions were not yet accepted by the private employer and how could they, therefore, be approved in a state department? A Civil Service tends to become bureaucratic

, the men were at the mercy of the officials. Surely some association, protecting their interests was excusable and of some value to the Department. The men would work better, if they were allowed to combine. Mr. Maxwell's attitude showed clearly that the heads did not trust to the sense of justice of the men, and their suspicious and autocratic attitude did not increase the understanding of the men. No one seemed to consider that the men could have any notions of justice, unselfishness or fair play. Some people did see the justice of the men's cause but they were in a minority. At the same time one can see that the fear that the service might become the prey of ambitious politicians was one dictated by a feeling of responsibility for the welfare of the colonists as a whole. On the other hand, the railwaymen could not be blamed for getting the support of Members of Parliament, since they knew that all matters affecting them must be decided upon in Parliament. Members would not be likely to bring up trivial or false matters in the House, even though some railwaymen might desire them to do so.

The action of the Heads of the Department had, for the time being, prevented the continued existence of a railway trade union, but only four years later, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand was established.

THE FOUNDATION AND GROWTH OF THE AMALGAMATED SOCIETY  
OF RAILWAY SERVANTS OF NEW ZEALAND UNTIL 1903.

Chapter 4.

In the previous chapter we have seen how the Railway Department refused to recognise the claims of the Engine-drivers and Firemen's Association. The next development in railway unionism was the foundation, in 1886, of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand, a Society destined to play an important part in the railway, and also in the general industrial, life of the colony. Trade unions, during the difficult eighties, fought a hard battle for existence, but experience and the common struggle against overwhelming odds, were to give birth to the great unionist activity of 1889-90. Many were the new unions formed during these two years, but none had a greater membership roll nor was more powerful in influence than the great railway union, organised, just previously, on a nation-wide basis.

Discontent, arising out of long hours, small wages and bad working conditions, is the main factor in the foundation of most labour organisations. In view of the conditions prevailing in the New Zealand railways in 1886, the formation of the A. S. R. S. was amply justified. The working hours were nominally sixty per week, with overtime, after having worked sixty hours, paid at rate and a quarter. Broken time was not counted, and the door was left open for the working of excessively long hours per day, in some cases three alternative days constituting a week's work without overtime. Guards were of two classes, first and second class; fifty per cent of each. Guards of the second class received

eight shillings per day, for the first year and eight and sixpence per day for the second year. Promotion from second to first grade depended upon the total number of classified guards employed. Employees of lower grades acted for long periods, as guards, without receiving the higher rates of pay and this reacted adversely on the percentages. Obtaining a "recommendation" was also important and it was, therefore, difficult, indeed, to measure the prospects for promotion. Having achieved promotion to first grade guard, the rate of pay was nine shillings per day during the first year and nine shillings and six pence per day for the subsequent years until after seven years service in the first grade a satisfactory guard became entitled to receive ten shillings per day. Coaching and Goods foremen were paid at the rates of ten and twelve shillings per day. Second class porters received thirty nine shillings per week and first class porters, at important stations, were paid from seven shillings to seven shillings and six pence per day.

\* Hours were unlimited and an excuse that insufficient time was allowed to do a certain amount of work was met with the reply ' There is plenty of time between six a.m. and six a.m.' (23)

There were four classes of shunters. The fourth class received seven shillings, the third class seven shillings and six pence, the second eight shillings, and the first, ten shillings and six pence a day. Head shunters received ten shillings a day. Engine-drivers received ten shillings per day until they had

(23) A. S. R. S. "Jubilee Souvenir" 1936. P.8.

seven years service, when they rose by six pence a day until they reached eleven shillings per day. Promotions to the first grade, with pay from eleven shillings and six pence to twelve shillings per day, were made as vacancies occurred. Firemen were of four classes, the fourth class receiving seven shillings and sixpence per day and each higher class sixpence more a day. Four shillings a night, was allowed to firemen and engine-drivers, who could not get home at night. Cleaners were of four classes, the wages being Five shillings, five shillings and six pence, six shillings and seven shillings per day.

Labourers in the Permanent Way Department received six shillings per day, surfacemen six and six ; gangers, third class (90% of total) eight shillings per day, second class (5%) nine shillings and first class ten shillings per day. Sub-inspectors received from twelve to fifteen shillings, bridge inspectors thirteen shillings and inspectors of the Permanent Way seventeen shillings per day.

Tradesmen's pay varied in the different trades, but was on an average, from eight to ten shillings and sixpence a day. Apprentices, in their first year, received eight shillings per week, in the second ten shillings, in the third twelve shillings in the fourth fifteen shillings, in the fifth eighteen shillings in the sixth twenty shillings and in the seventh twenty-four shillings per week.

Station masters were of four classes; the fourth class received £150 per year, the third £175, the second £200 and the first £250 per year. House allowance of £25 per year was allowed the three lower classes and £50 the first class. The clerical

staff was divided into three classes. The third received from fifty to a hundred pounds a year, the second from a hundred to one hundred and sixty pounds and the first from one hundred and seventy to two hundred and fifty pounds per year, the payment in each class depending on the length of service.

Promotions, in all classes, depended upon seniority, ability and conduct and, in some cases, special examinations had to be passed. These rates and regulations were made in 1880. Th above conditions, the unsympathetic treatment of complaints and the harassing of the men, finally resulted in the foundation of the Amalgamated Society.

Early in February, 1886, five men accidentally met one Sunday afternoon, on the Railway Wharf at Auckland. The conversation drifted into a discussion on railway working conditions, which were anything but good. The men ~~agreed~~, unanimously, agreed that the time had arrived for some collective action.

Mr. J. Mack, Secretary of the A.S.R.S. from 1908 to 1927, writes of the establishment of the Society "Whether action was to be political or industrial, did not, at the time, concern them. Their main idea was how to get the men organised so that they could speak as one man. They knew that those in the forefront of any movement would be "marked men" but this did not deter them from making a determined effort to establish an all grades organisation-one that would embrace the whole railway service. The five men were-Christopher Leek, guard, formerly a goods guard on the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. He had been associated with the A.S.R.S. of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales..and, coming to New Zealand in May 1884, he



joined the Railway Service and it was he who, eighteen months later, was to be the moving spirit in a movement to try and improve the conditions, under which the railwaymen of New Zealand laboured. The others present were Tom Wade, Bill Tate, Jack Lowe, all guards and Steve Moulden, senior porter at Auckland, for many years. These men were all personally known to me; I worked with all of them; strong in character, determined in the fight, yet all of them had a kindly, sympathetic disposition. They had no thought for themselves. They lived and moved to try to make the lot of railwaymen better..."

"The object that these men had in view was to take shape quicker than any of them, at that time, imagined. One of their fellow workmates, James Bracewell by name, met his death by striking a water tank at a station called Tuakau. It was claimed by the men that this tank was too close to the line and that such accidents could be prevented by an organisation to look after the interests of the men. This unfortunate occurrence gave an impetus to the movement in the following manner.

A number of the employees, wishing to attend the funeral, offered their services free, if the Department would run a train to bring those living in the country, and this was granted. After the funeral most of them met, informally, and a collection was taken up to defray preliminary expenses in connection with the formation of the society. The result of this was that a meeting of all grades of railwaymen was called for Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. 1886. The meeting was held in the Waverly Hotel, adjoining the Auckland Railway Station. Those present were John Smith, Christopher Keek,

William Tate, Thomas Wade, Charles Wilkinson, Hugh McFarlane, Frank Mc Gregor, John Lowe, Oscar Peat, all guards; Thomas Clarke, storeman, William Elwin, Reginald Aicken, Stephen Moulden, porters, Charles Webster, signaller, and Richard Robinson, head shunter. The whole of the foregoing were elected a committee to further the movement.....

There was no flinching from the job they had set their hand to. They knew that the movement would be unpopular with the officials, but they were determined to carry on, regardless of the consequences. Jack Smith was elected chairman and Chris. Smith secretary. No time was lost. A name was wanted. Dick Robinson was the first to move. He proposed and Chris Leek Seconded, that a society be formed and designated " The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand"...Tom Wade proposed that the entrance fee be two shillings and sixpence and the weekly contributions three pence. This was seconded by Frank Mc Gregor and carried.....It was then decided, on the motion of F. Mc.Gregor, seconded by Dick Robinson, that rules be drawn up by the Committee and presented to the next general meeting" (24)

Among the problems of vital interest confronting members at the inception of the Society were:

(1) Security of employment and a national minimum wage, below which no railwayman should be required or asked to work.

(2) A reduction of the daily and weekly working hours.

(3) Equality of bargaining power in the important matters of  
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(24) A.S.R.S. "Jubilee Souvenir" 1936 p.4.

of wages hours and general conditions of work.

(4) Co-partnership in the control of the industry on equal terms based on the assumption that what concerns all should be decided by all.

(5) Installation of safety appliances.

(6) Adequate medical, surgical and hospital facilities.

(7) Full wages for the injured and adequate compensation for accidents. (25).

The Society, in its early years, had to follow the "wet rent" principle, which at that time was well established in connection with trade unions at "home". Lacking proper meeting places, the unions found shelter in the public-house, nominally rent free, although it was an understood thing that the gathering of men was associated with a convivial glass. In many respects the traditional English methods of trade union organisation were reproduced in the new land, but, as in other aspects of life in the colony, which was free from the burden of past tradition and convention, railway unionism was adapted to suit the new conditions.

The early meetings were held in the Waverly and Britomart Hotels in Auckland. At the second meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. T. Clark was appointed Assistant Secretary. The proposed rules were discussed at considerable length, but no finality was reached. A week later, the rules, as read, were adopted, largely on the lines of the English A.S.R.S. The rules contained provision for a Sick Benefit Society, but the fixing of a scale of fees and benefits

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was held over, the meeting being of the opinion that every effort should be concentrated on the establishment of an industrial organisation first. "There was no definite indication as to whether the organisation was to be political in its activities or purely industrial. There were strong advocates for each school of thought, but the majority favoured letting the Committee use its own judgement as to methods best suited to obtain a satisfactory settlement of any dispute or grievance placed in their hands....The outstanding feature was the unanimity of all that its rules must be wide enough to embrace all classes of railway servants who wished to join in this forward movement for improved conditions, the guiding principle being, "One industry, one union" -not an association of unions, nor a federation, but one union for New Zealand railwaymen, with branches established wherever a specified number of men felt that it would be successfully carried on". (26)

At a meeting of the Society on March the 22<sup>nd</sup>, a guard, Samuel Cameron, (who died at the age of ninety two years in Western Australia, in 1935 ) was elected Vice-President of the Society. From this time onward, membership grew rapidly, at every meeting new members were enrolled. The heads of the Department were hostile to the Society, a fact which deterred some men from joining, but the enthusiasm of those canvassing for members ultimately brought success. Leading Society men were frequently transferred to other districts, but the scheme proved abortive for the interest in the Society became more widespread. All sorts of means were adopted to rouse interest in the organisation. One of the first actions of the Auckland

Committee, was to organise a dinner and ball which was held on June 11th 1886, and the aim of which was to strengthen the the friendly social ties between railwaymen. Another means adopted was to reject and refuse to recognise subscription lists of any kind, or for any purpose, unless such lists bore the imprint of the Society.

At meetings on the eighteenth and twentyfifth of April 1886 an important question was raised, that of honorary members. It was decided that the recognised fee for honorary members, that of 10/6 for life, be changed to £1. 0. 0. per annum. Such members were to be entitled to vote on all subjects except financial ones. This question of honorary members was later to become "a bone of contention" between the Management and the Society, as honorary members were, admitted, who took an active part in the Society's affairs and yet were not members of the railway service. We have seen how in 1882 a storm raged over this very question in Otago. If outside men were to interfere, and particularly politicians, the New Zealand Public Service was to become merely the lever of agitators and politicians. At the same time the final authority in railway, and other public service matters, was the Government and Parliament and to secure a satisfactory hearing of complaints and demands, these had to be discussed in the House. Railway policy and conditions of service were matters of public interest. Members of Parliament who were interested in the social and economic conditions of all workers rendered great assistance to the members of the railway societies in their demands for redress of grievances and for better

conditions. The importance of securing the support of members of Parliament was insisted upon, again and again. Frequently politicians and others, who had befriended the railwaymen, were made honorary members of the societies. In the early days, when victimisation was undoubtedly a practice, the assistance of non-railwaymen in organisation and government of the unions, was of great value. The first honorary member of the A.S.R.S. was Mr. F.J. Moss, a member of the House of Representatives for an Auckland electorate. He was elected on October the 21<sup>st</sup>. 1887

A keen interest was taken in the conditions of service existing <sup>in</sup> the sister colonies and in the mother country, the "Railway Review" was obtained from England and the railway organisations in the sister colonies were asked to forward copies of their rules, in the hope that these might afford valuable suggestions for the New Zealand Society.

On April 25<sup>th</sup>. 1886, it was resolved that no political topics should be discussed at meetings of the Society. Until May, 1886, meetings had been held weekly, after that date it was decided that meetings be held on the first Thursday in each month, later the meeting night was altered to Friday and then until the Sunday afternoon following pay day. No doubt prospects of receiving prompt payment of dues were brighter if the men were called as soon as possible after they had been paid. Until February 1891, all meetings were advertised in the newspapers, the members paying the dues.

A special meeting was called on July 18<sup>th</sup>. 1886, when Mr. Moulden moved and Mr. Gilkinson seconded a motion that "the

Society do join the Trades and Labour Council at once by paying the contributions required." Messrs. Smith, Donnally and Gilkinson were elected the first trustees of the A.S.R.S., after it had been resolved to place the funds in the Auckland Savings Bank. Messrs. Robertson, Robinson, ( replaced in August by Mr. T. Lowe) and Mc.Gregor were the first delegates to the Auckland Trades and Labour Council.

The first salary paid to any official was £2.10.0., paid to the secretary for the ensuing six months together with £1.1.0. for his past services.

In November, 1886, it was agreed that the A.S.R.S. recommend to the Trades and Labour Council that a fine be levied on each society in the case of delegates absenting themselves from meetings, without a reasonable excuse. Already in April, it had been decided that committee members of the Society be fined sixpence, if they did not attend meetings. Ardent as some of the members were, others had to be forced to do their duty. An interesting and instructive resolution of November, 1886, was that which demanded the appointment of a doorkeeper at each meeting to ensure that only A.S.R.S. members be present. Outsiders had been attending and opponents had spread misleading reports of the proceedings.

Early the Society took up the question of individual grievances of members. On March 3<sup>rd</sup>. 1887 a resolution was carried that each member of the Society was to keep a copy of each caption or fine he suffered and to hand the same over to the secretary of the organisation, for future reference.

So was completed the first year of the activities of the Society.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY UNTIL 1904

Until 1890, Auckland was the centre of the New Zealand A.S.R.S. In 1889 the Auckland general secretary was sent on an organising tour, as a result of which branches of the Society were formed at the main railway centres. The first national conference was held in Christchurch in 1890, and for many years Christchurch was the centre of the organisation. Each branch submitted recommendations to be discussed at the annual conference, while matters of major importance were referred to a referendum of the entire membership. Since Auckland was the senior branch I shall refer to some resolutions of that branch to illustrate the attitude of the branches in important matters.

The main rules for the organisation of the union had been laid down in the first year. As early July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1887, it was agreed that "any resolution recorded in the minutes prohibiting political discussion at our meetings be rescinded." Victimisation of members was a real danger and on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1887, the following resolution was carried "this Society pass a vote of confidence in its secretary and pledge itself to support him or any other member of the Association in the event of their being unjustly treated through taking an active part in the management of the Society's affairs."

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1889, delegates from Lyttelton were present, who asked if the secretary might visit the south in order to establish branches there. Thereupon, it was resolved that the secretary take steps to arrange for a canvass of the



colony for the purpose of establishing branches at the principal railway centres; the expences of such to be charged on the general management fund. Twenty pounds were voted for the object. The secretary than went on tour and in February of the next year he received payment of £26.4.0 for his expences. On March 30<sup>th</sup>. 1890, Mr. J. Edwards resigned from his position as general secretary of the Auckland branch and moved to Christchurch, where he was stationed as General Secretary of the A.S.R.S. at its headquarters.

Preparations for the calling of the first national conference of the Society went ahead. The Heads of the Department were asked to grant leave of absence to the delegates to the Conference. The first national conference was held in the Oddfellows' Chambers, Lichfield Street, Christchurch. from March 6<sup>th</sup>. to March 12<sup>th</sup>. 1890. Those present were Messrs. W. L. Hoban, (President of the local branch), W. Gibbons, R. Winter, W. Owen, J. Jenkinson, J. Newton, D. Handisides, F. Elvines, J. Rae (Christchurch) J. Lowe (Auckland), M. Hibden (Napier), R. Hayden (Wanganui) E. Woods (Palmerston North), J. Dobson (Wellington), J. Puttick (Timaru), R. Stewart (Oamaru), L. Harris (Dunedin), G. Patterson (Invercargill), J. Cherrie (Westport), W. Gulliver (Greymouth), and W. J. Edwards (General Secretary). Messrs. Lowe, Woods, Winter, Harris and Edwards were appointed a Standing Orders Committee, Mr. Hoban was to be President and Mr. Stewart, V.P., during the conference, to which the Press and financial members of the Society were admitted.

Mr. Hoban was a solicitor, whose father had been an engine

driver and he, himself, was interested in the railway conditions and labour problems in general. As President, he delivered his inaugural address at 2 p.m.

"When we look back and recollect that three months ago, railwaymen were a scattered body but are now to the number of four thousand, united under one head, when we look back to the time each employee was under his own standard, fighting his own battle against his fellow employees and today a mighty union exists, we cannot but feel that, so far, our labours have been a great success.....We all know that unions are the world's truest friends for they bind the employer and employee more closely together and create mutual obligations in each of them. Unions have raised our workmen from positions of serfdom to freedom.....So far as the Railway Service is concerned, no one can deny that there are grave grievances and it would be advisable, if possible, that a deputation from this conference should wait on the Sweating Commission now sitting in Christchurch.....In your hands, to a great extent, rests the future welfare of all railway employees ....Let us remember that we are taking part in a great battle which behoves us to stand shoulder to shoulder, for the enemy is strong. Remember, also, that the universal problem of the world in the past, as well as in the present, is the organisation of labour, and if we succeed in shedding a little light on the solution of the difficulty, our time will be well spent."

The ordinary rules of order were adopted and the examination of credentials held. Each branch, through its representatives, was to exercise one vote for every hundred, or part of a hundred, financial members on its books. Three months previously there had

only ninety members, at the time of the conference there were three thousand one hundred and eighty three members and a sum of £467.0.0 in hand. The Auckland branch had paid £65 to organise the union and had also paid the expenses of Mr. Edwards to the Conference, pending the centralisation of funds. It was, therefore, agreed that "each branch remit to Auckland sixpence per member on the books as at February 22<sup>nd</sup>., to recoup that branch for the expenses defrayed in organising the union and money advanced to the General Secretary for his attendance at the conference." The main officers elected for the following year, were; President, Mr. Hoban, Vice-President Mr. Owen, a quiet, unassuming, intelligent and well-read engine driver, Treasurer Mr. Rae, a non-railwayman, and Secretary Mr. Edwards.

The attitude of the Conference to the Commissioners' Insurance Bill was then defined, as was the relation of the Society to the Trades and Labour Councils, to the Australian railway unions and to the Maritime Council. The question of offering assistance to the strikers at the Petone and Wellington Woollen Mills was discussed and recommendations were decided upon to be placed before the Railway Commissioners, in regard to wages and conditions. The A.S.R.S. was to be registered under the Trade Union Act 1878<sup>(27)</sup>, any alterations required to be made in the rules for the purpose were to be effected by the Executive Committee.

Before the Conference rose reference was made to the kindness of the Commissioners in granting leave of absence to the delegates. The President complimented the delegates

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(27) This Act had the same effect as the 1871 and 1874 English Acts.

on their work and especially for the fact " All provincial jealousies had been laid on one side and the welfare of all kept steadily in view."

In April the Auckland Committee condemned the conference for ruling on questions affecting wages and conditions without consulting the branches. In May, upon receipt of a letter from the Executive, requesting the branch to ballot on the question of the Society's relation to the Government, it was decided to wait until the General Secretary was able to inform them of the position of the Society and its relation to other societies. On the twenty-first of the month the decision was reached that the branch had full confidence in the dealings of the national Executive with the Railway Commissioners.

The first conference of members of the A.S.R.S. and the railway Management took place in June, 1890. Those acting for the Society were Messrs. Hoban, Edwards, J. Elvines (Maintenance), R. Winter (Workshops), W. Haden (Clerical) and W.J. Owen. The Department was represented by Commissioners J. McKerrow, J.P. Maxwell and W.M. Hannay, while other officers also attended. Evidence was given at this conference of the payment of an insufficient scale of pay to boys, some of whom received only ten shillings per week although entitled to three shillings per day; the proportion of boys employed was excessive, hours were too long and on account of indefinite promotion regulations, many adults received only £105.0.0. per year. The Society men urged that more men be employed rather than overtime rates be paid. These matters received the attention of the Department and many improvements were made. After long discussion, the

the principle was established that the men who were dissatisfied with any decision of the Department might make further representation through their organisation. The Society received the recognition of the Commissioners. The value of the Society as a medium through which to make known grievances was recognised by the men, for the local officers no longer had the final authority and grievances, the <sup>evil</sup> results of personal feeling were reduced.

All the branches were gratified to hear of the beneficial results of the conference and the Society representatives were thanked.

The Year 1890 witnessed great industrial unrest in New Zealand and the railway employees were involved in the strikes of the year. The failure of these strikes dealt a heavy blow to the unions. Railway unionism weathered the storm, although some men were dismissed and relations with the Commissioners were strained. In November the Auckland Committee was deploring the lack of interest in the Society's affairs. The Commissioners had withdrawn recognition of the Society until stipulated alterations were made in the rules. At an Auckland branch meeting on December 27<sup>th</sup>, a member related that a colleague, when asking for an increase in pay, had been informed that "increase would not be granted to anyone who was a member of the A.S.R.S., as at present constituted, unless the Society was formed on lines laid down by the Commissioners and further, that no promotion should take place."

The General Secretary, on a North Island tour in 1891, addressed a meeting at Auckland on the twentieth of January.

He referred to the foundation and growth of the Society and to the cause of affiliation with the Maritime Council, the failure of which had been due to the irregular system of working and to the fact control had been in the hands of three men in Dunedin, Messrs. Miller, Gibb and Maxwell. Mr. Edwards commented strongly on the action of the Railway Commissioners in sending railwaymen on board ships at Lyttelton, an action which involved the A.S.R.S in the Maritime Strike. The Society had withdrawn from the Maritime Council, and as the Management had not replied to the Executive's letter in regard to the reorganisation of the A.S.R.S it was the intention of the Executive to place any grievance in the hands of Members of Parliament.

Preparation went ahead for the holding of the next national conference, although on April 11<sup>th</sup>, it was known that the Commissioners had refused to grant leave of absence to the delegates. The conference was held in the Society's rooms 185 Gloucester Street Christchurch, from April 16<sup>th</sup> to April 18<sup>th</sup>. 1891. The delegates were few in number and the votes of absent ones were divided amongst those present. The President regretted the unfavourable circumstances at the time of meeting. He had been opposed to affiliation with the Maritime Council. The Society had been able to weather the storm and the dismissal of four men from the service had not deterred others from joining the union. After the vote of the Society, in favour of disaffiliation with the Council had been secured, the Executive had opened communications with the Commissioners, in the hope of securing an amicable settlement. The latter had issued a circular demanding the disaffiliation of the Society from other labour organisations,

the exclusion of non-railwaymen from the membership, and forbidding any person to advise or counsel any employee to disturb the rates and regulations, instructions or bye-laws of the railways. Acceptance of these provisions was the condition of recognition. "It was at once seen to be quite impossible to successfully conduct the business of the Society on the lines suggested by the Commissioners and universally considered an unwise step to limit the officers of the Society to actual employees, apart from the fact that it would be a most unprincipled action to cast adrift the employees of private company lines". The managements of the private lines were thanked for the concessions, similar to those on state lines, which they had granted to their men. The conference felt that, judging by the action of the Minister of Post and Telegraph in refusing to recognise the Post and Telegraph Union, it was clear that it mattered little whether the members were all government employees or not, in which case it would be to the advantage of the Society to have outside officers to conduct the actual business of organisation without fear and trembling. The Commissioners evidently did not desire friendly relations with the railwaymen and yet they were quite willing to recognise the Employers' Association and Bureau at Lyttelton.

The main business of the conference concerned rules, the provision of a Death Benefit Fund, the publication of a railway paper and federation with the Australian railway unions. At the conference of 1890 it had been agreed that a "Railway Review", reporting on railway and Society matters, should be issued. Mr. Edwards, who had a private printing business, edited and published the paper. The conference of 1891 was

called upon to consider the question of continuing the paper. Members had not paid subscriptions and Mr. Edwards felt that he could not continue to publish the paper at his own expence. The delegates felt that the "Review" was absolutely necessary and regretted the laxness of the branches in their attitude to it. Finally the secretary agreed to continue the publication if the Society would guarantee a specified circulation.

Mr. Edwards was reelected General Secretary, Mr Hoban President and Mr. D. Handisided Vice-President for the ensuing year

Before the meeting of the next conference a struggle had occurred between the Executive and the Auckland branch. Auckland had protested against the obligation of the branches to pay the expences of conference and had also recommended that the office of General Secretary should not be filled by one who had been dismissed the railway service. Mr. Edwards had been a station master before he had been dismissed the service. He was a fine organiser and a good secretary but as time passed many Society members felt that he devoted too much time to his publishing business to the detriment of his work as secretary. He was evidently a rather hasty tempered man and at times rash in his speech. The Executive wrote expressing disapproval of the Auckland protests, whereupon, at a meeting early in May, the Auckland branch declared that the Executive had done it a cruel wrong and had practically deprived it of freedom of speech. With reference to Edwards " It does not necessarily follow that, ~~because~~ because we aided him in our time of need , we are forced to stand by him now, especially when it is noted that his vindictive



attitude towards the Railway Department has done us untold harm and is slowly but surely crushing the very life and soul out of our society". Unless the Executive withdrew "their sneering imputations... we shall take into consideration the advisability of withdrawing our support from the Society and shall take steps for approaching the Commissioners on our own responsibility." Fortunately the breach, which had been threatened and which was a symptom of the difficult times, was averted on the occasion of a visit of the national President to Auckland in July.

Delegates were refused leave of absence to attend the next conference, which was called at Wellington on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1892. As a result many delegates were unable to attend but Members of Parliament for the various districts acted on behalf of the branches. The President referred to the unsympathetic attitude of the Commissioners and deplored the fact that many of their promises of improved conditions had not been kept, especially in the case of boy labour, which was becoming a very prominent feature of the service. Another great evil was that men entitled to promotion were denied it, at the same time blame for such a state of affairs was partly to be laid on the officers, who were jealous of each other and strained to keep expenses low. The General Secretary reported that the membership had increased by one thousand during the year, and that all the men who had gone out on strike were again back at work. The attitude of the Commissioners towards the Society was summed up in the reply given to the request for leave of absence. "The Commissioners would regard the attendance of employees as insubordinate, seeing that they had declined to recognise the present Society and

that its leaders openly counselled rebellion and were the means of leading large numbers of employees into trouble....." Any employee with a grievance could make his complaint in the usual manner. The secretary declared that, obviously, the desire was to break up the Society, an inevitable result of the non inclusion of outsiders. " After all, what is a railway union? Simply a body of men of like interests, banded together for mutual protection to act as a bulwark against the social law which ever tends to grind workmen down to penury and poverty..... Unity amongst workers is a natural sequence to existing social conditions, just as night follows day." Unfortunately, the Department did not share the same opinion on the value of unions. However, all those who had been out on strike were again at work.

The delegates also discussed insurance schemes, the position of the reinstated men in regard to the Death Benefit Fund of the Society, compensation, wages and conditions. Since the previous conference, a vote of all members had been taken and had disapproved the federation of all local sick benefits societies into one general fund under the control of the A.S.R.S.

By the time of the meeting of the next conference, a new era had opened for the railway union. In 1893 no meeting had been called as it was considered that such would be useless until railwaymen could obtain permission to attend. Negotiations with the Commissioners, aiming at gaining recognition of the Society, continued. The main obstacle to agreement was the demand that non railwaymen should be excluded from the Society's membership. A ballot was held and the result was announced in August

1894. 1120 members approved acceptance of the Commissioners' terms, only four disapproved. Branches were therefore instructed to make the necessary alterations in the rules.

1894 was the "annus mirabilis" of New Zealand legislation. One of the most important acts was W.P. Reeves "Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act", a measure much discussed by railway unionists at their branch meetings and also at the fourth national conference, which met in Palmerston North, from October 29<sup>th</sup>. until November 6<sup>th</sup>. 1894. The President spoke hopefully of the future now that the Society had received recognition, at the same time counselling delegates to acquit themselves in such a manner to deserve "the kindly consideration which the Commissioners had now shown towards them." Since the last conference railway servants had been affected by the Government Railways Act, 1894, which substituted direct ministerial control, for management by Commissioners, and they were now eligible to register under the "Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act" 1894. As a result of the labour troubles there had been a falling off of members and the Napier and Wellington branches had been afforded financial assistance.

The main items of business were the alteration of rules to conform with the terms of recognition, and to bring the union within the scope of the "I.C. & A. Act" 1894. In the latter case among other technical alteration, it was provided that, if grievances were not recognised after using all the ordinary machinery, the Executive should offer the Railway Department to refer the matter in dispute to arbitration in accordance with the above Act or to a board of appeal under the Government

Railways Act 1894.

Henceforth, it was decided, that the office of the "Railway Review" and the Executive should be together. As a result of the new conditions of membership Mr Hoban had resigned from the organisation. His work had been greatly appreciated. Mr. Rae, who was also a non railwayman, and who had been national Treasurer since 1890 had died and his place was difficult to fill. Mr. Handisides was elected President, Mr. Pullock Vice-President and Mr. W. Haden, a first division officer and an enthusiastic Society man, Treasurer.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>. 1895, provisions were made for the use of the Society's seal, for the dissolution of the Society and the making of industrial agreements by the branches. The consent of five-sixths of the members was necessary before the Society could be dissolved, in which case every member was entitled to a refund in proportion with the amount he had paid into the funds. Industrial agreements made on behalf of the society or any branch, were to be made in such mode as the Executive or branch committee, respectively, should direct, provided that no branch should make any industrial agreement without the previous consent and approval of the Executive Committee. All industrial agreements were to be executed on behalf of the Society or branch, under the seal, by such two officers as the Executive or branch committee might appoint on that behalf. The Society or branch thereof, was to be represented before the Court of Arbitration by such officer or person as the Executive or branch committee might appoint. The registered office of the Society was to be 185 Gloucester Street, Christchurch, and of the branch as the branch

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committee might please.

The next conference was held in Auckland from March 9<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. 1896. In the meantime registration under the "I.C.&A." Act 1894, had been effected both by the branches and by the Executive as an association. The Midland Company men had become Government employees and enjoyed like benefits, but the Manawatu Company men were being unfairly treated, despite protests by the Society. At the meeting the salaries of the branch officers were discussed and settled. Branch secretaries were to be paid from £3.10.0 to £30.0.0. per year and branch treasurers from 10/6 to £5.0.0., according to the roll number. All employees in the service who were members of trade societies, eg. the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, other than the A.S.R.S. could join the latter at a fee of five shillings per annum. The "Railway Review" was to be enlarged, an outside auditor was to be appointed and an outsider was to report on the proceedings of Conference. Two members, Messrs. Dawson and Winter, had been suspended. Finally, Mr. Dawson was readmitted and the following resolution passed, clarifying the situation. "When any member who has been paid moneys by the Department accepts a duplication of the amount from the Society, without notifying the officers or committee at the time of receiving such, he shall be forthwith expelled from the Society". Discussion then centred round superannuation and classification schemes. Mr. Handisides was re-elected President, Mr. Pullock Vice- President and Mr. Elvines Treasurer.

Before the delegates again met in Dunedin from March 31<sup>st</sup> to April 7<sup>th</sup>. 1897, the "Government Railways Classification Act" 1896, had been passed. Some branches had displayed personal

antipathy towards the Executive officers for their attitude in regard to the Act. The secretary declared " As to the Society generally, though the membership has not deteriorated, there is a sad lack of brotherly unity and fellow feeling in many quarters. It was decided that all main questions affecting the Society should be referred by the conference to a referendum of all the financial members. Future conferences were to be held in places where it would be possible for the General Manager of Railways to attend. The general secretary was to make more frequent visits to the branches.

After a long discussion it was resolved that it would be impracticable for the Society to publish a journal of its own, but it was deemed advisable to arrange " with the present proprietor of the "Railway Review " that that paper shall become the official organ of the A.S.R.S. and that the same shall be supplied to members at as moderate a cost as possible." Each member was to pay 2/6 subscription per year, and this was to be subsidised by one shilling each from the general and the branch funds. A sub-editor was to be appointed by the Society to look after its interests and to prevent the publication of material which might cause dissension. The Executive would act as a referee between editor and sub-editor on disputed questions. The Otago branch favoured the appointment of Mr. Hughes as General Secretary and Mr. Edwards <sup>asked</sup> therefore that a vote of all members be taken on the question. MR. Handisides, who was promoted to the first division, was presented with a testimonial in appreciation of his splendid work for the Society. Mr. Fullock was elected President, Mr. Hobbs, Vice-President and Mr. Elvines Treasurer.

During the next year a vote of all members favoured the retention of Mr. Edwards as general secretary. The main cause for complaint against him was that he spent too much time in his publishing business, and although he was approved this time he was finally forced to resign on this account. At the same time a vote of the members favoured Christchurch as the seat of the Executive. The delegates again met in conference in Wellington on March 30<sup>th</sup> 1898. They decided that, to prevent the risk that the Department might hold the A.S.R.S. responsible for the opinions expressed in the leading articles in the "Railway Review", the sub-editor should henceforth be known as the Society's referee. To avoid confusion all branch offices were to be kept separate from the Executive offices. A deputation from the Railway Officer Institute waited on the conference and expressed the hope that combined action of the two railway unions would bring reforms in the service. The conference, while expressing sympathy with the sister organisation, insisted that the A.S.R.S. was not prepared to part with one iota of the rights of its members.

The main problems discussed at the next conference which sat in Wellington from March 19<sup>th</sup>. to April 5<sup>th</sup>. 1900. were those dealing with superannuation and classification scheme the position of subscribers to the Death Benefit Fund, who went to South Africa, and with conditions in the service. The Society was in a flourishing condition and hopes were high in view of the appointment of Sir Joseph Ward as Minister of Railway

Two years went by before the delegates again met at Invercargill from March 8<sup>th</sup>. to 26<sup>th</sup>. 1902. Mr. Hobbs, the

President, and since 1891 a member of the Executive Committee, had, in the meantime passed on. Many of the old leaders had fallen out. The "Government Railways Classification Act Amendment Act" 1902 had also become law and was a great improvement on its predecessor. The question of arbitration and classification under the new act had been settled in a very practical manner by the Minister of Railways, who took a plebiscite, the result of which was that out of 1407 votes only 82 favoured arbitration. Under arbitration members would have lost all the benefits conferred by the regulations under the Act 1901 and yet by arbitration they would have obtained no more than was provided by the schedules of Classification Act.

The "Railway Review" had become the property of the Society and Mr. Edwards felt that in giving up the "Review" he had severed his closest tie with railwaymen. He doubted if the same high standard of independence could be retained under the new ownership.

The salary of the general secretary was now fixed at £210 per year and he was to receive fourteen days paid holidays each year. The Society had grown since the days when the secretary received £2.10.0 for his services.

The last conference in our period took place in Wellington from March 22<sup>nd</sup> to April 11<sup>th</sup>. 1904 The great event of the period had been the passing of the "Government Railways Superannuation Fund Act" 1902. In the meantime, too, registration under the Trades Union Act 1878, had been abandoned, upon technical grounds, and registration effected under the "I.C. & A" Act alone. Another feature of importance for the future history



of the Society had also received notice. Disunity in the ranks was only too prevalent. " It has been observed that efforts are being made by sections of the locomotive running staff and by members of the traffic staff to start independant societies and the time has arrived, in the opinion of the Executive, when the A.S.R.S. should very firmly nip the business ~~in~~ the bud. Recently the casual staff at the Christchurch Goods Shed had endeavoured to start a union of their own, but they had been blocked by the Management objecting to the Registrar of Trade Unions, against the registration of any body of railway workers in Division two, so long as the A.S.R.S. exists. It will be well that this conference should affirm a principle of intention to block the registration of any other railway society " This policy was to be well demonstrated in later years, both when the locomotive men and again the tradesmen, sought to found separate organisations.

The system of annual, then bi-ennial conferences of delegates from Branches throughout the colony had been a regular feature of the organisation of the A.S.R.S. At each conference a list of subjects for discussion with the General Manager and the Minister of Railways, was decided upon. The representatives from the Society, would then meet the responsible heads of the Railway Department ~~and~~ and, usually, some grievances were remedied or concessions were gained. Prior to each conference, branch meetings would discuss matters causing dissatisfaction; in the main these related to hours of work, wages, overtime rates, conditions of work, transfers, promotions, holidays, privilege tickets and free passes, housing and board allowances.

Representations in reference to hours and conditions of work were, perhaps, the most important and typical of the Society's activities. In August 1889, the Auckland committee instructed their secretary to write to the commissioner, calling attention to the fact that guards were working on Sundays and receiving only half a day's pay. Frequently, after working nineteen hours on one day they would be called on duty the next day. During October, 1889, the committee requested that the Trades and Labour Council communicate with the Commissioners with reference to these matters.

At the first National Conference, 1890, it was alleged that many guards worked eighty hours per week and that the average day for the locomotive running men, was thirteen hours.

Discussion waxed hot on the question of limitation of hours since conditions varied in the different parts of the colony. The decision of the conference was that no person employed on the New Zealand railways should work more than forty eight hours per week except in cases of emergency; that for time worked in excess of forty eight hours per week payment should be at the rate of rate and a quarter for the first four hours and rate and a half for additional time. It was also decided to demand rate and a half for time worked on Sundays. Another demand was that no man should be called out for duty within eight hours of completing a shift except in the greatest emergency. One of the chief grievances at the 1892 conference was that shunters who had been promised an eight hour day, were called upon to work from ten to fourteen hours per day. This conference decided to ask that plate layers should have a forty eight hour week with a half holiday on Saturday

By 1900 the Society had been able to secure a definite time for the midday meal at Christchurch engine depot, some concessions to casual workers in the workshops and some ameliorations in the conditions of signalmens' work. By 1902 the Society's efforts had been successful to the extent that a forty eight hour week, each week standing by itself, and rate and a quarter payment for overtime for shunters had been secured.

#### APPEAL BOARD.

In 1890 the conference delegates favoured a Board of Arbitration to be elected annually as follows; two members by the Society, two members by the Commissioners and a fifth chairman selected by these four members, from outside the service. All matters of dispute which could not be settled between the Society and the Commissioners, to be submitted to this board whose decision should be final. Two years later the desire was for Boards of Appeal to be set up in each of the principle centres of the colony, to deal with railwaymens' grievances. These Boards were to consist of — one member appointed by the commissioners, one elected by the employees and one appointed by the Minister of Public Works. The latter was to be asked to embody this proposal in his railway management bill.

The setting up of the first Railway Appeal Board was authorised on January 1, 1895, as a result of an amendment to the Railways Act 1894, which provided for two Boards, one in each Island. These Boards each consisted of — one member elected by division two staff and one member elected by the officers, division one, and a stipendiary magistrate to be appointed from time to time by the Government to act as Chairman for

a term of three years.

The grounds of appeal were set out in the Act, together with machinery clauses which were later subject to amendment.

An appellant had the right to retain the services of a fellow member of the service as an advocate at his appeal which must be lodged within one month of the notice forming the basis of his grievance. Two members of the Board could make a decision subject to the Minister's right of veto of any decision by the ~~Appeal~~ Appeal Boards. No decision became operative until signed by the Minister. In 1898 the Society asked that appellants should have the right of representation by counsel, that the Department should, in all cases, publish the finding of the Appeal Board and the ruling of the Minister of the Minister thereon.

In 1910 it was suggested that the Minister's right of veto should be abolished and, two years later the desire was expressed that, in cases of appeal, each appellant should be provided with a copy of all correspondence bearing on the case, including the remarks of superior officers, within a reasonable time of the hearing of an appeal.

#### DEATH BENEFIT .

One of the greatest benefits provided by the Society, was the Death Benefit. As early as June 1889, the proposal had been made that an accident fund, providing for the payment of ten shillings a week to members incapacitated through accident suffered while on duty, should be established. On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1889, it was agreed that a Sick and Funeral Benefit be added to the rules of the Society, membership of such a fund to be optional and the fund, itself, to be brought into operation at such time as sufficient inducement offered.

At the national conference in 1891, the proposed Death Benefit was adopted. The levy was to be six-pence a member. Any member of the Society, who desired to pay into the fund was first to make himself financial on the books of the Society. On the death of any railway employee, who was a contributory member of the Fund and who had been a member of the A.S.R.S. for at least six months and who was not more than eight weeks in arrear of contributions, any levies that may have been struck since he became a member of the Fund; immediate notice was to be sent, through the branch to which the deceased belonged, to the General Secretary, who was, thereupon, to declare a levy of six-pence on all surviving members. For the sake of despatch in paying out on the death of a member, each branch was, on the date of the Fund coming into operation, to collect a levy of six-pence from each member. The subscriptions paid were retained by the branches. When the General Secretary called up a levy, on the death of a member, he also was to enclose an order to the branches to collect another levy the proceeds of which were to be held in reserve until called in by the Head Office on account of another death. On the death of a member, his wife, or legal representative, was to receive such a sum as was produced by any one death levy on members, less expenses incidental to the working of the Fund. Should any participant member leave the service at any time, he was to be entitled to all the benefits of the Fund until the levy in hand at the time of his leaving, should have been called up.

At the conference 1892, the General Secretary reported that not many had availed themselves of the privileges of the Fund, which at the time was worth £24. for a membership of 960.

Henceforth the levy was to be one shilling, and payment was to be made immediately. It was hoped that the men who had struck work in 1890, should be allowed to join the Fund. In June 1893, the Auckland branch resolved that, as the time lapsing between death and the final winding up of the levy had a bad effect, the levy roll be revised. On receiving notice of a death, the branch secretary should forward to Head Office a sum equal to all the members on the levy roll, whether all subscriptions had been paid or not. The Executive was to pay over the whole amount which was to be determined by the last return from each branch.

In 1894 a new fund, the Death and Disablement Fund, membership of which was optional, was announced. Members were to pay one shilling each month until the fund exceeded £200., when payment should cease until that level was again reached. There would be two or more levies per month if there were two or more deaths. The money for payment at death would be advanced out of the general management fund of the Society. Fines were settled in the case of delay in payment of subscriptions, and were incorporated in the general management fund. If a member received a total disablement fund he was not entitled to receive the death benefit. No members over forty years of age ( except members of the Death Benefit ) could join the Fund after February 1<sup>st</sup>. 1895. This provision was suspended in the next year. At the Conference in 1897, it was resolved that no death benefit would be paid until all means had been exhausted to secure the employment by the Department, of the member if his injuries enabled him to perform some railway duty. In the following years it was provided that a member leaving for South Africa should not

participate in the Fund on leaving New Zealand. The average value of the benefit until 1902 was £66. and the largest subscription £5.16.6.

#### CONNECTION WITH TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCILS.

The A.S.R.S. was founded in a period of increasing industrial activity in the colony. Essentially New Zealand unionism of the period was based on craft organisation, liberal in its politics and non revolutionary in aims. Scientific socialism was not yet a force in the colony. " The main stream of the movement was in the organisation of trade union opinion in Trades and Labour Councils." (28) These were particularly active in Christchurch and Dunedin. The chief work of the Councils was to organise unions, suggest legislation and to prevent strikes. The Councils of the eighties had both political and industrial functions and were involved in the troubles of 1890. When they had recovered from the defeat of that year they were reorganised for a time, at least, as non political bodies.

The A.S.R.S. had close relations with the Councils in the different centres. Frequently representations in regard to railway conditions were made through the Councils to the Commissioners. Thus in May, 1889, the railway delegate to the Council in Auckland, was empowered to explain to that body the scales of pay in Australia and New Zealand so that the Council might refute statements made in the House of Representatives. In September, 1890 when it had been agreed that a public meeting should be held to consider the action of the Railway Commissioners in dismissing

employees it was decided that the Council should call the Meeting. These are typical examples of the use made of the Council by the Society.

Not only did the Society discuss railway conditions with the Councils, but the A.S.R.S. assisted, through the Councils, in the organisations of unions and the improvement of labour generally. The railway society was frequently asked to give suggestions for the better establishment of the Councils themselves. Accordingly in November the Railway Society sent a delegate to a meeting, which had been convened to discuss the best means of reorganisation of the Auckland Council in 1892. He was instructed to inquire into the aims and operations of the Council, especially in regard to capital. The political aspect of the Councils' work can be illustrated by the request to the Society in 1890, to send six representatives to act with delegates from other societies for the purpose of forming a political committee in connection with approaching elections, a request which was granted.

In June, 1890 the Society in Auckland, had agreed to pay £5. per year to the Auckland Council, but in March 1893, the finances would not allow the payment of a levy of sixpence per member per quater and regret was expressed at the inability to give more than moral support. In 1894 the Auckland Council had arranged a Labour Conference, and, although the Auckland branch of the A.S.R.S. sent £2. towards the expences, it was unable to lay any matters before the Conference, owing to the terms of its constitution.

At a meeting held in Christchurch in February, 1894, to



consider the reorganisation of the Trades and Labour Council a railway delegate was present. In September the railway delegate had withdrawn. In the meantime, had come the recognition of the Society by the Railway Commissioners, with its attendant condition that the Society withdraw from all labour organisations and political affiliations. Accordingly, until the legislation of the present Government of the Dominion has allowed the railway unions to affiliate with other organisations, these have had to play an indirect part in the general labour activities of the Dominion.

The A.S.R.S. in its early days had close connections with the Eight Hours Committee, which aimed at the statutory recognition of the eight hour working day. Auckland may again illustrate the relations of the Society and the Committee. A monster eight hour day demonstration was held on November 10<sup>th</sup>. 1890, the year of the Maritime Strike in the colony. Amongst others five railwaymen were appointed to act as pickets for a preliminary meeting held on October 28<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the foundation of the Maritime Council, the day which was to be observed as Labour Day the May Day of New Zealand. It was arranged that on the morning of November 10<sup>th</sup>, the members of the A.S.R.S. should meet at the Britomart Hotel, near the Auckland Station, and proceed from there to the Queen Street Wharf, where they should fall in with the main procession. As one reads these instructions one realises more fully the unionist activity and enthusiasm of 1890, especially when one remembers that a small branch of the A.S.R.S. gladly paid £18.10.9 for a banner to be carried in the procession. As with the Trades and Labour Councils, direct communications were dropped by the Committee.

Railwaymen were always interested in political affairs. At election times the Society members would agree to support certain candidates who, if returned, would frequently be asked to state requests of the men in the House. To illustrate; in September 1887. Auckland members agreed to support Mr. F. J. Moss as representative for Parnell. In May of the next year a deputation of railwaymen waited on him. prior to his departure for Wellington, to explain certain grievances, which they desired to be brought under the notice of Parliament, to him. When reports of members of the expected Railway Appeal Board appeared in the newspapers of 1887, the Society immediately communicated with Mr. Moss, pointing out that a board, so constituted, could not fail to inspire the universal disapproval of railwaymen.

The labour legislation of Mr. W. P. Reeves was discussed ardently all over the colony. A typical Society resolution on the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894, which had been circulated earlier, is that of the A. S. R. S. delegates at the national conference in 1892. " This conference impresses on the Ministry the great necessity of passing the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act this session "

The elections of 1893 aroused great interest in the colony the fate of the new social and industrial experiments was at stake. While the Society could not take an active part in politics the Liberal Association was assured that railwaymen, at least A. S. R. S. men, would not fail to support men pledged to reform and sound liberal principles. All Society members were urged to see that their names were on the electoral rolls. A meeting of the Auckland branch in November is reported " Evening

almost entirely devoted to the selection of candidates who are to receive our support at the coming elections."

During the years that the Society was directly linked with other labour organisations, assistance was rendered to fellow unions in distress. The chief method of assistance was to boycott offending firms until these were forced to comply with union terms. One instance is typical. Perhaps the most militant of the early unions of New Zealand was the Bootmakers' union. In 1890, the Auckland branch of the A.S.R.S. boycotted the firm of Garret Brothers, who were most perversely addicted to the employment of boy labour and of non unionists. The boycott was evidently effective, for in a short time the Society men were glad to learn that the firm in question had complied with the union demands. Sometimes financial aid was given to strikers and unions, as in the case of the Huntly Miners' Union which was engaged in 1890, in the legal defence of some members who had been accused of damaging pumps. In the case of any national disaster the Society was foremost in sending out subscription lists. In the case of serious floods in Hawke's Bay in 1898, the Society collected over £110.

But of course the really important year of activity on the part of the New Zealand unions was the year 1890. As we have seen, New Zealand in the late seventies and in the eighties, suffered a severe economic depression, during which only the most vigorous trade unions survived. The eighties saw great industrial expansion and with slump conditions in Australia, the emigration from New Zealand ceased and immigration recommenced. In England very few unions survived the severe depression year 1879, but a

new spirit was abroad in the English trade union world in the eighties. Socialism, especially the scientific socialism of Marx, began to replace the more middleclass conservative influence of the Junta. The year 1889, when the famous Dockyard Strike occurred, witnessed a widespread revival of unionism.

In New Zealand, also, a new spirit was abroad. Men were discussing utopian socialist theories like those of Bellamy and the articles of W.P. Reeves on the socialist commonwealth. Sir George Grey's franchise bill of 1889 extended the electorate to the working man and a few years later women received the vote. Small farmer and urban worker combined against the squatter, the tariff movement gained strength, opposition to the Continuous Ministry within the House, itself, increased. The new Liberal party supported the small farmer and the urban worker with the gratifying result that it succeeded at the polls in 1890.

Between 1880 and 1890 trade unions became a real power in the colony. The growth of towns and of the factory system, the decline of the alluvial gold fields, the "poor mens' diggings", the occupation and locking of the more fertile and accessible lands, financial enterprise and financial failure all gradually tended to reproduce in the young country old world industrial conditions. The labour of women and children was resorted to in the workshops.

A campaign was carried on in the "Otago Daily Times" by the Rev. T. Waddell and Mr. G. Fenwick, for an inquiry into the conditions on industry and resulted in the appointment of a Royal Commission. The majority report denied the existence of

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of sweating conditions, but a minority report of three of the Commissioners declared that sweating was a fact. The findings of the Commission excited keen public interest.

Delegates to the first national conference of the A.S.R.S. in 1890, waited on the Commissioners when they sat in Christchurch. The chairman of the Commission, Mr. Fulton, advised the men to bring their grievances before Parliament independently, so that a special Commission might inquire into them. Later, he agreed that much might be lost if the men waited until the next session of Parliament for something to be done. He asked the delegates to give him some idea of the type of tribunal which they would advise to investigate grievances, which he admitted did exist. The Sweating Commissioners were willing to see the Railway Commissioners about improvements. The delegates resolved that the Commissioners should be asked to hear their grievances, so far as their time allowed and report the same to Parliament. Should this be impossible they were to be requested to do their utmost to procure the appointment of a special board of inquiry to investigate railway grievances, the board to consist of five members, two appointed by the Government, two by the Society and the fifth, who must be outside the railway service, by these four.

The cause of unionism in the colony received a powerful stimulus as a result of the findings of the Sweating Commission, as a result of the new interest in socialist theories and as a result of the great Dockyard Strike. The Auckland branch of the Society in September 1889, held a meeting to discuss the Dockyard Strike and sympathy was expressed for our "oppressed brethren at home". The men were ashamed that New Zealand had done nothing

while Australia had done much to assist the strikers. The branch voted £20. towards any fund for the strikers and would have liked to donate £50. As it was, £20 was no small sum from an organisation the size of the Auckland branch of the A.S.R.S. The donation makes clear the fact that there was a new spirit abroad in the trade union world in the colony, that of co-operation among workers of all types and nations.

This new realisation of the need for international co-operation and this new sense of the brotherhood of labour were the dominating principles of the Knights of Labour, a brotherhood founded in U.S.A. and organised in New Zealand in 1882. The influence of these Knights was worldwide and their aims secured the sympathetic support of many New Zealand politicians, Ballance Mackenzie, Seddon, and of the unions. They favoured the strike but never counselled violence. Party government was deprecated, the large estates must be broken up, the standard of life must be raised. The propagandist lecturing tour of Mr. Lyght, in 1890, on behalf of the American order greatly increased interest in unionism. The railway Society, as other unions, had connections with the Knights. One instance will suffice to give an idea of the type of connection. In September 1893, the Auckland branch of the A.S.R.S. sent delegates to the local lodge of the Knights to confer with delegates of other unions on the question of how best to further the interests of the worker, and on popular education.

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(30) The fact that the organisation of the Knights was secret, together with their advocacy of the strike and their wide influence, made the Knights the *bête-noire* of the employers. The debacle of 1890, was a great blow to the order and their influence slowly died.

By 1890 some New Zealand employers had begun to realise that trade unions might be other than necessary evils and might be of benefit even to themselves. A well-organised union kept up the standard of life of the workers, there was less discontent and therefore less stimulus to strike work. Thus in the year 1890 unionism had once more become a strong influence in New Zealand, out of a population of 600,000, the unionists numbered 60,000. (31)

In 1888 was founded the Seamens' union, to which the A.S.R.S contributed funds and with which it corresponded. Then on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1889, was founded, in Dunedin, the Maritime Council. The organisers hoped that the Council would embrace all the large unions. The Treasurer of the Council was Mr. J. Lomas, President of the Miners' Union, and the Secretary Mr. Millar, Secretary of the Seamens' Union.

In April, 1890, Mr. Lomas, at a Christchurch meeting, said that, if there was any attempt to reduce wages, he hoped that the Miners' Union, the Railway Union and the Maritime Council would prevent such by combined action in locking up sea, mines and railways. This was the attitude of the Maritime Council throughout. In May, at the first half yearly meeting of the Council, the delegates waited on the Railway Commissioners and insisted that casuals be union men; and on the Prime Minister, one of the objects of discussion being the alleged truck system of the Midland private railway line.

A dispute between the owners and the Employees of the Shag Point coalmine was arousing interest. The secretary of the Council notified the Manager of the Union Steamship Company that no goods belonging to the firm of one of the owners would be handled by

members of the Seamen's Union until the dispute was ended. Letters were sent to the affiliated unions and the A.S.R.S. asking for aid. As a result of this determined stand the owners were forced to reinstate the dismissed men. (32)

In March 1890, Mr. Lomas had explained the aims of the Council to delegates at the first national conference of the A.S.R.S. The conference decided that the question of affiliation with the Maritime Council should be referred to the Executive, who should be empowered to collect the necessary information and to lay their proposals before the branches. Every member of the Society should have an opportunity of voting on the matter before any action was taken. By the end of August affiliation with the Council had been affected. 3241 members as against 37, favoured affiliation.

The first big dispute in which the Council was concerned was the strike of the men working for the firm of Whitcombe and Tombs, publishers, in Christchurch. In March 1890, the Typographical Association requested the firm to adopt a certain scale of wages, to employ none but union labour, to cease employing girls as compositors unless these were paid the same rate as men. This request met with an absolute refusal, for the Directors were resolved on running the firm on non-union lines. The general public feeling favoured the men against the firm, for the findings of the Sweating Commission had come as a nasty shock to many. (33) The Typographical Association called out all its members. When the Association attempted to secure arbitration, the Company

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(32) J.B. Salmon, thesis "Labour movement in New Zealand"-p.104.

(33) "Economic Journal" London 1891 P. XII



refused, it had no further concern with its former employees who had been replaced by non unionists. The Association, backed by the Maritime Council, appealed to the public to boycott the firm. The A.S.R.S. was notified, at the end of July, not to handle goods consigned to or from the Company. The Railway Commissioners were asked to decline to carry any goods of the firm. Their reply was that the Railway Department was a common carrier and could not discriminate between members of the public. The Chief Commissioner stated " You have raised a question not of Capital and Labour... but, in short, whether society shall be governed by constitutional or by lynch law " <sup>(34)</sup> The firm threatened to prosecute both the Railway Department and the Union Company, should these refuse to carry goods consigned to or from them.

The Council threatened to call a general strike, a threat which caused a reversal of public opinion although Robert Stout and some of the news-papers still defended the Council. One unionist at a Christchurch meeting, declared that the railwaymen would simply be called out on a question of boycott. They would refuse to carry the goods of the offending firm; if any man was suspended for his action and the Commissioners refused both to refer the matter to arbitration or to reinstate him, the railwaymen would cease work. Despite the effort made by the railwaymen to persuade the Commissioners to change their attitude, these declared that if any men refused to handle the firm's goods they would be dismissed. 144 men were suspended at Lyttelton.

A meeting was held in Auckland, far from the centre of the trouble, on August 16<sup>th</sup>, the object being to discuss the threatened strike. A letter from the General Secretary, giving

the causes of the dispute and announcing that the Executive had decided to act in the matter under the Council, was read. Mr. Lowe declared that the firm should be boycotted and that the Council did not intend to call out the men on a general strike. Many were against a strike, which would have a bad effect on the entire trade of the colony and yet would not directly affect the firm concerned. Members pledged themselves not to deal with the Company nor with anyone buying or selling the firm's goods.

Meanwhile affairs were becoming very serious in Christchurch capital and labour were preparing for a struggle, since on the refusal of the Company to arbitrate, a strike seemed inevitable. However, on August 16<sup>th</sup>, <sup>The Council</sup> announced that there should be no strike, the firm would stand apart in the colony as the only one which refused to recognise the just rights of labour and the true principles of unionism. This turn of front resulted from the fact that railwaymen, realising that the Commissioners were determined and prepared, would not strike. (35) Agitation continued for a time but the matter was dropped. A respite had come but the storm was imminent.

In August 1890 occurred the outbreak of the great Maritime strike in New Zealand, a strike which was the culmination of all the increasing illfeeling, during the previous years, between capital and labour. The struggle was industrial war pure and simple. the strike was rather the expression of general social discontent and of the growing solidarity of trade unionism than the result of particular grievances.

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The immediate cause of the struggle was the dispute between the Australian Marine Officers and the Shipowners over the right of the former to affiliate with a labour organisation. In 1884 the Union Steamship Company had joined the Australian Shipowners' Association. In 1889 the New Zealand Maritime Council affiliated with the Maritime Council of Australia. The dispute in Australia was complicated by the refusal of the Sydney wharf labourers to handle non-union wool. The New Zealand Council agreed that the Union Company's ships would be all right so long as they were manned by union men. Unfortunately, one of the ships had a non-union crew and the extension of the trouble to New Zealand became inevitable.

The employers had been dismayed by the great expansion of unionism and they were prepared to fight against it to the end. In the struggle which followed employers blamed unionists for the trouble, while unionists declared that they had been opposed to any trial of strength, which had been caused by the attitude of the employers. The whole system of unionism was at stake, the Union Company belonged to an organisation whose object was to crush unionism, the workers had been forced to defend themselves.

In August all the unions connected with the Maritime Council were called out on strike. On August 29<sup>th</sup> the Executive of the A.S.R.S. imposed a levy of half a day's pay per month per man in support of the strike. A telegram on the next day was received by the Auckland branch, requiring an immediate vote on "Are you prepared to strike if called on by the Maritime Council to assist present struggle... Federation with Council completed. Victory assured."

Nearly all the men at Westport had refused duty in

connection with the loading and discharging of coal. Water side workers had struck work in sympathy with the seamen and now the Railway Commissioners instructed the traffic men and the platelayers to proceed to Lyttelton to handle cargo. This was to make union men strike breakers. Accordingly on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Edwards, the Secretary of the A.S.R.S., worked his way round the Lyttelton wharves and called all railwaymen off the trucks. There was no disturbance of any kind. Branches of the Society pledged the ~~members~~ members to the support of the strikers both morally and financially. Many members offered to donate one or two days' pay to the strike fund.

The action of the railwaymen precipitated a crisis and public interest was aroused. At a meeting of railwaymen in Christchurch on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, it was contended that while railwaymen did not wish to strike, the Commissioners had forced the position by using them as strike breakers. A resolution was carried expressing unqualified approval and admiration of the manner in which the men on strike had responded to the call of the Executive. The meeting pledged itself to stop work to a man if called upon either to assist in terminating the struggle or to force the reinstatement of the men on strike.

The Commissioners demanded that the men return to work within twelve hours or be dismissed the service. At the same time W. Owen, F. Elvines, R. Winter and J. Newton prominent members of the Executive Council of the A.S.R.S. were dismissed, nominally because work was slack, but really, the men were convinced, because of their statements at the meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The threat of the Commissioners fell ~~on~~ deaf ears, and 74 men were dismissed

The Commissioners declared that the railwaymen, through the A.S.RS, had precipitated the strike, but this was vigorously denied by the Society. A section of the press and of public opinion sympathised with the men and criticised the vindictive attitude of the Commissioners. The "Otago Daily Times" saw the need for discipline in the railway service, but considered that the suspended men should be reinstated and something allowed for the fever in the blood of the working classes and especially of the railway servants. In Parliament John Ballance and W.P. Reeves led the attack on the Commissioners, whose action, they declared, had precipitated the strike. The general protest against the use of railwaymen as strike breakers ended this practice for the time.

At Lyttelton all types of volunteers worked on the wharves. The employers founded an Employers' Bureau and other associations at Lyttelton and throughout the colony. In October the Government, instructed by the House of Representatives, invited employers and employed to meet in conference in Wellington. The Employers' Association declined to take part unless the unionists admitted their right to engage free labour and agreed to work with free labourers, while the Railway Commissioners refused to attend. A conference took place but the employers refused the terms. After the conference the strike fizzled out and the unions agitated in vain. The vacant places were filled in no time, for labour was plentiful.

Meanwhile railwaymen were concerned with assisting those who had been dismissed. After the first few days some of the less enthusiastic had found it difficult to keep up the payment of the levies. On the other hand, more ardent unionists had desired

that all the railwaymen should be called out. They were disappointed when only those who were used to load on the wharves were called out. In November, the Executive advised that a vote would be taken on the question of the Society's disaffiliation from the Council and on the 19<sup>th</sup>. December, it was announced that 114 favoured withdrawal and 50 had been against disaffiliation.

At the national Conference in 1891, the President referred to the disastrous result of the connection with the Council. Although disaffiliation had been effected, the Commissioners would not recognise the Society until their demands had been met. The delegates resolved that a voluntary subscription be taken up in all branches in aid of the railwaymen who had been out on strike. By 1892 all those who had been dismissed during the strike had been reinstated. £1989.7. had been paid in strike pay beside £32 for those in special distress. In 1904 it was agreed that the finances of the A.S.R.S. would allow the payment of perhaps £10. to each member who had struck work.

An unforeseen result of the strike was that which came <sup>Under notice</sup> ~~was~~ when the " Government Railways Superannuation Fund Act " was passed. The regulations of this act in regard to the counting of broken time, penalised those who had struck work in 1890, for these men lost, for superannuation purposes, all their service time prior to the Strike. The Society contended that the strike was legitimately forced upon the men by the action of the Commissioners and therefore the men should not be penalised. Test cases were contested but not until 1908 was a settlement reached. The Government offered that the disability should be removed on the payment of £1500 by the A.S.R.S. was accepted. Thus the Society paid for the rights of those, who, in 1890, had responded willingly to the cause.

The Maritime strike failed. The time chosen, summer, was a bad one for striking purposes, since the withholding of coal, especially as large stocks had been accumulated at the time of the Whitcombe and Tombs' dispute, proved less effective than it might have been. Trade was slack and therefore fewer boats could be run with advantage, the harvest had not yet commenced and farm labourers swelled the ranks of the volunteers. The farmers were opposed to the strikers, for they wished to take advantage of the very high prices for their produce which were being offered in Sydney. (36)  
The strike would make this impossible.

It would have been better if New Zealand unionists had kept free of the Australian dispute and had been content to render financial assistance to their Australian colleagues, but this proved impossible, for at the time, federation with the Australian unions was an important characteristic of New Zealand unionism. In 1890 the A.S.R.S. conference had resolved "The time has now arrived for immediate federation with the railway unions of Australia..and that immediate steps be at once taken to have such federation carried out" All members were to express their opinion on the matter. As a result of the failure of 1890, federation with Australian unions was no longer considered advisable.

As in England, after the failure of strike methods 1830-4, so in New Zealand after 1890, unionism, left without organisation or funds became dominated by new principles. Defeat proved ~~inst~~ instructive. Instead of reliance in the strike, the method for the amelioration of conditions was to be the Legislation. In December 1890 the Liberal Ministry with its programme of social legislation took control of the Treasury Benches.

Although the railway union suffered from the failure of the Maritime strike, yet it was not permanently disabled. Indeed, it recovered very soon and once it had received recognition by the Management, its strength increased very rapidly. Nor did the Society forget its place among other unions in the world wide labour movement, in 1898 £100 was sent to the striking fund of the locked-out Engineers' at "home". Not only had the A.S.R.S. increased in power, but in 1895 a new railway union, the New Zealand Railway Officers' Institute was established.



THE FOUNDATION AND GROWTH OF THE NEW ZEALAND RAILWAY  
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 OFFICERS' INSTITUTE? 1894 - 1903.  
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Chapter 5.

For some years the officers of the service threw in their lot with the second division men in the A.S.R.S. Although the Society did splendid work, yet circumstances over which it had no control, prevented such an amalgamation of forces on the part of officers, from highest to lowest, as would have proved effective in grappling with the peculiar status of the official section. The officers of the Auckland section, felt that some organisation should be formed, to represent and protect the interests of the officers. Enthusiasts, when their efforts to stimulate other branches were unsuccessful decided to go ahead on their own.

A letter dated at Christchurch on March 31<sup>st</sup>. 1894, from Mr. Gray to Mr. Loring at Dunedin, an enthusiast for the cause, is a typical one. Mr. Gray said that he, himself, was not in the movement for the foundation of an officers organisation, but "my private opinion is that we should first organise a railway service association on the lines of the Public Service Association, which would include all classes of railway officers and servants.... I am also informed that even in the Auckland district the movement is not at all supported with any great unanimity.. ..my advice is, try the Association plan first."

The officers all over the colony were corresponding on the question of classification and this facilitated the formation of an officers' society. At Auckland, a local committee of Messrs.

A.V.Macdonald, J.E.Armstrong, A.H.Mellor (Relieving Officer), P.A.Duncan(Chief Goods Clerk), A.Duncan, secretary,(Station Master, Newmarket), G.G.Aicken(S.M.Onehunga), and R.B.Peat(S.M.Frankton) was formed.

Messrs.Peat and Aicken, on annual leave together,toured the colony in an endeavour to obtain members and form local committees. The two interviewed officers at New Plymouth, Hawera, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Wellington, Lyttelton, Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, Invercargill and Bluff, as well as at other stations en-route. In the main, officers were favourable,but in Wellington and Canterbury the men, influenced by the hostility of their chiefs, Messrs. T.E. Donne and W.H.Gaw, were afraid to give open support. Branches were formed at Wanganui, through the ardent support of Mr. C.A.Marcus, at Napier, with MR.A.Graham , later the President of the Institute as President and Messrs. Hutchings and J.Faris as enthusiastic members, at Dunedin where Messrs.S.Loring, R.V.McVilly,T.Arthur, and Brownell were all favourable,with Mr.Loring as Chairman and Mr.Brownell as Secretary, at Invercargill with Mr.F.Styles as Chairman and Mr.Barlow as Secretary, and later at Wellington, when Mr.Styles was transferred there,and at Christchurch after Mr.Pilkington had visited Auckland,where he had been converted. The sole enthusiastic supporter,at the time of the visit of the Auckland members, in Canterbury, was Mr.Stevenson of Ashburton. The difficulties of organisation in a colony where the population was scattered and distributed along the main trunk lines , and not grouped round a natural centre,had necessitated the long tour of organisation,undertaken by enthusiasts during their precious leave.

When the delegates returned to Auckland ~~to Auckland~~, they were able to report the formation of many branches. On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1894, a general meeting of Auckland officers unanimously resolved to form the New Zealand Railway Officers' Institute. The Provisional Committee, which was to summon the first national conference in 1895, included Messrs. J. Stevenson (President), A. Duncan (Secretary), G. G. Aicken, J. Young, J. E. Armstrong, W. Owen, J. Day, W. P. Williams, J. R. Boswell, C. Peach, C. H. Jenkins, C. Loveday, P. A. Duncan, A. H. Mellor, A. K. Harris and D. A. Wright. When MR. Duncan was transferred to Picton, Mr. G. G. Aicken became secretary.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1895, the Provisional Committee waited on Hon. Mr. J. A. Cadman, Minister of Railways, and the Institute was duly recognised by the Government. The main purposes of the society, as outlined in the Provisional constitution, adopted on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1894, were to promote the general welfare of the members by any means not inconsistent with the regulations of the Department, to create funds for the benefit of members, to stimulate unity and good feeling and generally to improve the status of the service.

Once recognition had been gained, membership increased and plans were made to hold a national conference. Although the Management would not grant free passes to enable members to attend, privilege tickets were issued, and leave of absence granted. Some of the delegates, including Messrs. Faris and Macdonald, met in an informal conference at Wanganui on November 15<sup>th</sup>, before proceeding to Wellington for the first national conference which was held in the Phoenix Chambers, Lambton Quay, November 18<sup>th</sup>.

until December 7<sup>th</sup>. 1895. Mr. S.J. Loring was unanimously elected Chairman and Mr. R.V. McVilly, Secretary. After a short discussion it was decided that publication of the proceedings would be in the interest of the Institute. A report of the conference was to be furnished to members and to the General Manager of Railways.

Mr. A.H. Mellor presented the report of the Auckland Provisional Executive, the membership then being 796. The delegates unanimously carried a vote of appreciation of the work of the Auckland Committee. After the ordinary preliminaries, the conference went into Committee to draw up a constitution for the society, which was to be known as the New Zealand Railway Officers Institute. For several reasons the drafting of the constitution took longer than was expected. However, it was felt that the constitution finally adopted provided for all the contingencies likely to arise in the ordinary management of the Institute's affairs. The General Manager stated that the delegates were to remain in Wellington until the conference had completed its labours and discussed matters with himself. He made the necessary arrangements. The Institute was to be registered according to law, there was to be an annual reunion of members, who, if on holiday or transfer, were to be aided by their colleagues. On the acceptance of the constitution on November 27<sup>th</sup>, the conference was declared closed and the first Executive Council in session.

The first matter to receive the attention of the Council, was classification. After a committee had reported on the matter the delegates then considered grievances which should be placed before the Management. It was decided that application should

be made to the General Manager that an allowance be provided towards the expenses of the Councillors as had been the case with the A.S.R.S. conference; but this was not to form a precedent. Mr. Loring was elected President and Mr. A. Duncan Vice-President for the coming year. The General Secretary was to receive £25. per year. £25 was to be forwarded to the Auckland committee, which was to recoup Mr. Aicken for his expenses. Later the Department granted £55. towards the expenses of the conference, which money was divided between the delegates from the branches outside Wellington.

Before conference rose the members waited on the General Manager of Railways with respect to recommendations made during Conference and satisfaction was expressed at the kindness with which delegates were received and heard. A committee comprised of Messrs. Faris, Mellor, Styles and Mc.Villy was appointed to deal with questions of classification and compensation during the recess.

Meetings of the Executive Committee were held in the Station-Master's office at Wellington until June 1901 when the General Secretary's office became the meeting place..

The Department agreed to grant facilities both to the members of the Executive Committee and of the Classification Committee to enable them to be present on important occasions.

At a meeting held on the fifth of December 1895 it was decided that all members should pay a levy at the rate of 6d. for every £50 of salary, to meet the organising expenses. Many of the Branch Committees objected to this imposition but the levy was defended as necessary to place the Institute funds on a sound basis.

It was agreed that the Executive Council should retain the £25 voted by the 1895 conference to Auckland Branch, in lieu of a levy contribution from that district.

The Department agreed to convey packages containing subscriptions addressed to branch secretaries, free instead of charging at the rate for stereotype casts.

With a view to ensuring accuracy in the amount of subscriptions due by each member, it was arranged that the Department furnish branch secretaries with the particulars of officers' salaries as on January 1, of each year; the branch secretary to supply the department with the roll of members in the district and the members to agree in writing.

During the first year the Executive Committee was concerned, chiefly, with internal organisation, registration, classification and compensation. The first annual report, dated March 10, 1897, stresses the need for friendly relations with the A.S.R.S., for loyal support from the Branches and declared "It should be borne in mind that success is achieved by assisting, not by needlessly embarrassing the heads of departments and more real progress will be made by steady perseverance than by a headlong and illconsidered rush which, in the end, will only result in friction and defeat its own object."

The second national conference was to have been held in March, but the Department would not allow leave of absence during that month so that the delegates did not meet until June 28, 1897. In the meantime the President, MR. S. J. Loring, died; kindly, zealous and capable, he was highly respected and very popular.

There were 820 members on the roll on December 31<sup>st</sup>. 1896. Mr. McVilly had resigned from the position of General Secretary, and it was therefore decided that a non railwayman should be appointed to fill the vacancy. Mr. C. D. Morpeth was selected. Delegates spent most of the time discussing rules of the Institute, wage recommendations and classification proposals. A committee of Messrs. Mellor, Faris and Russell was appointed to represent the Institute in any negotiations dealing with classification. During the conference Messrs. Wilson and Robertson, delegates from the A. S. R. S. expressed the belief that the two railway union would always work together in the most cordial manner for the good of the staff as a whole. The Councillors also waited on the General Manager and on the Minister of Railways, both of whom were thanked for the facilities afforded the delegates, especially for the grant of a week's leave of absence and for the use of the room of the Minister of Public Works.

The chief officers for the coming year were, President : Mr. F. Styles, Vice-President. Mr. Mr. A. H. Mellor and General Secretary Mr. C. D. Morpeth.

The next conference of the R. O. I. was held in Wellington May 18<sup>th</sup>. until May 25<sup>th</sup>. 1898. As usual discussion of rules and conditions of work took up much of the delegates' time, but the questions of classification amendment and of superannuation were the main items of business. Mr. J. T. W. Stevenson was elected President and Mr. C. A. Marcus Vice-President for the coming year.

A year later, from June 9<sup>th</sup>. until June 14<sup>th</sup>. 1899, the annual conference assembled to discuss the regular items. When waiting on the Minister on June 14, Mr. Styles expressed the

Council's regret on hearing of Mr. Cadman's decision to retire from the position of Minister of Railways. When the Institute was formed Mr. Cadman was in control and the men appreciated his generosity in granting all that was necessary for success. Mr. Cadman declared that he had had great pleasure in doing what little he could to further the interests of the Institute, which was doing valuable work, not only for its members but also for the improvement of the relations between Department and officers.

In December 1899, Sir J. G. Ward was appointed Minister of Railways, an appointment very popular with railwaymen. They felt that the time was at hand when they should secure a favourable amendment of the Classification Act 1896, and the establishment of a suitable superannuation scheme. Railwaymen were full of confidence in the future. As it was, Mr. A. Graham of Bluff, wrote to the Executive of the R.O.I. "I have heard all along the line that more has come out of our last conference than any previous one and the R.O.I. is now in a better odour."

The writer of the Dunedin branch notes in May 1900, expressed gratification in the fact that many matters were receiving consideration from the Department. Both the travelling public and the staff were appreciative of the improved accommodation at many railway stations. The Minister was anxious to bring things up to date and the Institute would do all in its power to help. "Why should New Zealand not take first place in railway as in other matters?" New Zealanders of the day were justly proud of the reforms inaugurated by the Government.

The Wellington secretary of the Institute, however, deplored the meanness of some members. "We have heard of an



American mean man who, on the event of an explosion, stopped the pay of his workman during the time he was suspended in mid-air , but I am willing to believe there are some members of our Institute who can give the American points."

No conference was held in 1900, the delegates did not meet until August 1<sup>st</sup>. 1901. Mr. Styles was again elected President and Mr. A. Graham Vice-President. Superannuation schemes and classification proposals again received attention from the delegates.

Not until 1904 was there another conference , but by that time both these subjects had been dealt with in Parliament. In July 1902, the Executive Committee of the R.O.I. had accepted, with the utmost regret, the resignation of Mr. F.W. Styles from the office of President. Before the meeting of delegates in 1904, Mr. Styles had passed on. Thus two of the most enthusiastic of the early members of the Institute and the first two Presidents , Mr. S.J. Loring and Mr. F.W. Styles, had been lost to the Institute, for the success of which they were in no small measure responsible. They had passed on, but their work had not been in vain, the society which they had helped to build was a respected force in the railway world of the colony.

It had been the intention of the first councillors that the R.O.I. should be registered under the " Unclassified Societies Registration Act " 1895, but in June 1896, the Executive were informed that registration could not be effected until the rules of the society, which went too far for the "Unclassified Societies Act " and not far enough for the " Friendly Societies' Act ", received amendment. In the meantime the Institute had no legal position.

In February 1896, it was found necessary to explain to the Wellington branch committee that outstanding subscriptions could not be recovered by law; the only method of enforcing payment was to read out the names of defaulters at general meetings.

Negotiations with the Registrar of Unclassified Societies continued, rules received the necessary amendments and on 22<sup>nd</sup>. December 1897, a special meeting was held in Wellington, when it was resolved that the N.Z.R.O.I. be incorporated under the Unclassified Societies Registration Act 1895. In February of the next year, after the registered office of the Institute had been given as 42 Lambton Quay, Wellington, certificate of registration was granted.

The previous October, the General Secretary had written to Mr. Matthewson of Otago, asking what advantages would result from the suggested registration of the R.O.I. under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894. The matter was discussed and in July the Department was asked if there was any objection to the affiliation of the Institute under the above act. Affiliation was disapproved.

The funds of the Institute were originally placed in the Bank of New Zealand, but in June 1898, it was decided that branches should transfer all their accounts to the Post Office Savings Bank, since this would be less expensive. In July of the next year the Controller of the Savings Bank informed the General Secretary that the money could only be deposited in an ordinary trust or joint account, for the R.O.I. did not come within the scope of the Savings Bank regulations. The account would have to be opened in the name of the trustees. However in September 1901, Mr.

Morpeth received information that authority had been obtained by Order in Council for the acceptance in the Post Office Savings Bank of the funds of the N.Z.R.O.I.

Again and again, country members wrote stressing the need for some good method of informing them on matters of importance and of the attitude of the Executive in vital questions. Quarterly Reports were issued to all members, but it was felt that a paper, giving items of personal and general interest, would be the best means of stimulating interest in the Institute's affairs. At the conference of 1895, the matter of arranging for the publication of a news-paper had been left in the hands of the Executive which was to secure if possible an amalgamation of all the public service journals. The Executive entered into negotiations with Mr. W.J. Edwards, secretary of the A.S.R.S. and proprietor of the "Railway Review" and on November 21<sup>st</sup>. 1896, he was invited to Wellington to put forward his suggestions.

Mr. Styles, President of the R.O.I., explained that his organisation did not desire, in any way, to disturb the good feeling which existed between the two railway unions, on the contrary it was the Institute's aim to make these relations better still. For this purpose nothing would be more effective than the publication of a good, readable paper, free from politics and run on broad lines. Mr. Edwards said that this was also his idea. The A.S.R.S. paid him a fixed monthly sum for the issue of a certain number of copies of "Railway Review", but there had been no general agreement between the Society and himself, and the above arrangement would terminate in March 1897. The cost of printing the paper was about £10. a month; at one time there had

been a committee to which all contributions were referred , but this had proved ineffective and he , himself, became editor. He did not consider that an editorial committee of four members would be useful, instead he would suggest the appointment of two sub-editors, representing the indoor and the outdoor staff. Many of the men still distrusted the officers. Mr. Styles insisted that the officers should have a certain amount of control in order to prevent the appearance, under their auspices, of objectionable articles.

Several suggestions were made with a view to the establishment of an effective system of control. Finally, Mr. Edwards agreed to the following terms. Two sub-editors were to be selected by Mr. Edwards, one to represent the officers and one the outdoor staff. The officers' representative must be approved by the R.O.I. The price of the paper, which was to consist of 24 pages, was to be 4/6 per year. Politics were to be strictly eschewed. All correspondence affecting, or reflecting on, the officers, or on the men must be submitted to their representatives before publication. Non railwaymen were not to contribute to the paper. The patronage of the Institute could be withdrawn if the Executive were dissatisfied with the conduct of the journal. For the present the "Railway Review " was to be the recognised organ of the R.O.I. A long-felt want had been met and officers were urged to support the paper. At the national conference of the A.S.R.S. 1897, the " Railway Review " became the official organ of that society; a step forward; the paper had become the recognised organ of all railwaymen.

Mr. Edwards was asked to report on the R.O.I. conference

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1897 and at the same time the desire was expressed , that, in the future, the General Secretary might edit all contributions affecting the officers. The Executive were dissatisfied when the report of the conference was abridged and the demand was made that no material sent in by the Executive should be abridged without its consent. In January 1898 Mr. Morpeth wrote to the publisher objecting to the tone of the paper in regard to politics, especially the use of belittling phrases such as " A people's government " in the recognised organ of the R.O.I. Mr. Edwards wrote an indignant answer and in February, the agreement was terminated. The " Railway Review " was no longer the recognised organ of the Institute.

Reports of meetings and other matters were , however, sent to the Review from time to time. The Canterbury branch of the R.O.I especially, made use of the Review in publishing the reports of its activities and the Executive, though rather doubtful about the expediency of this action, had to admit the legal right of the branch to use the paper.

Once the agreement had been terminated , the method of disseminating news by the issue of Quaterly Reports was resumed, but was not satisfactory. Late in 1901 it was again suggested that there might be some agreement with the Society on the question of a news-paper, but as the majority of the members of the latter were unsympathetic the matter dropped. Funds were low and even the issue of the Quaterly Report became irregular. Not until 1910 was the first issue of the " Railway Officers' Advocate " published.

A common interest in a railway news-paper was only one of the bonds linking the railway societies. Despite occasional

ill feeling and jealousy, on the whole, the relations of the two societies were good. Some of the members of the Society did retain a feeling of suspicion for the "boss", the officer whose presence in the Society until 1895, though giving an appearance of unity had, perhaps, a dampening effect on some of the men. On the other hand some officers rejected, self-righteously, any suggestion that they should be classed with members of the second division.

Both unions, however, realised that in many cases they must stand or fall together. The aims of both were to improve the status of members and to provide a more efficient service. On large questions, especially classification and superannuation, the leaders recognised that all railway employees must present a united front. Every time committees of the two organisations worked together on some interest for the common good a new feeling of hope and harmony justified those who hoped, one day, to see the foundation of a single society representing all railwaymen. Each supplied the other with reports of the proceedings at the national conferences, at which representatives of the other were present. On these occasions there was an exchange of courtesies as a result of which differences between members of the two societies were decreased and personal grievances between officer and man were deplored.

Both societies demanded that meeting rooms should be provided for the staff. The two endeavoured to come to some arrangement whereby the object might be achieved. The officers suggested that fines for carelessness should be used towards the provision of rooms at the main centres, but the Society would not approve of such a use of fine money, since only those living in or near the

the main centres, and not all employees, would benefit.

Committees of the A.S.R.S. and the R.O.I. worked together on classification proposals and discussed the clauses of the Bill severally with the Minister in September 1896. As a result the bill was shaped in such a way that the railway unions were able to accept it as a step in the right direction. During the negotiations the executive committees of each worked together in the most cordial relationship. The Quaterly Report of the R.O.I. for 30<sup>th</sup> September 1896 states " The interchange of opinions was of mutual advantage and the amicable manner in which the two committees worked together, amply demonstrated the fact that the members of the outdoor and indoor staffs can sink all differences and work unitedly on any question affecting the general welfare of the service " In the first annual report of the Institute it was declared that the aims of the A.S.R.S. and the R.O.I. were almost identical and " it would be most inadvisable and inimical to the best interests of the Institute, the heads of the Department and the A.S.R.S. to act in direct antagonism to the heads of the Department and the A.S.R.S. .... The cordial relations existing between the three is the best evidence that can be deduced of the success of the first years work and .... the Executive desires to strongly urge the succeeding committee to carefully consider the advisableness of adapting a similar policy, feeling assured that it is the one that will eventually prove most successful, and the only one that will result in one united railway society in the future. "

In 1898 there was some illfeeling between the two societies occasioned by the system of transfers from division two to one. The officers insisted on the retention of the percentages and on

the educational qualifications required by the Classification Act 1896, while the Society desired easier conditions of transfer. Neither side would accommodate the claims of the other and as a consequence nothing was done. A similar bone of contention was the regulation in regard to the issue of free passes.

Relations between the two societies were very strained in 1900. A regular item in the work of the Institute was the arranging of reduced tariff rates at boarding houses and hotels and of reduced fares on ferries and coaches. In July 1901 it was suggested that the co-operation of the Society in such matters be requested, but the Executive of the R.O.I. were emphatic in disapproval, being "averse to co-operation with the A.S.R.S. as regards tariff because we do not wish to be beholden to the A.S.R.S. in any way, in view of their very hostile attitude towards us of late." (37)

This ill-feeling was largely the result of the disagreement between the societies in connection with the amendment of the Classification Act 1896, which was the question 'par excellence' for railwaymen in 1901. Both societies desired amendments, but they could not agree on what these should be. Telegrams were sent to members of Parliament, articles were sent to newspapers, all with the object of securing the amendment of the act during the session. The officers were especially zealous in their campaign and it was hoped that the Executive of the A.S.R.S. would assist. Mr. Edwards informed Mr. Morpeth, late in October, that past experiences would not warrant co-operation with the R.O.I. It was a pity that the Institute had not realised their common interests long before, instead of "thwarting our efforts for the common good." Not an attitude that was likely to pour oil on troubled waters.

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[37]. Letter Morpeth to Penn (Canterbury). 6/1/01.



In October the feeling among the officers was that the Society delegates would probably block the passing of the Bill, which was introduced late in the month. At the same time, the officers were determined to go ahead and accept the bill for their division. Mr. Edwards was an able, but rather impulsive man, one who was inclined to lose his sense of proportion in crises, and his action and "wild statements" provoked this complaint from Mr. Morpeth who wrote to Mr. Styles that Mr. Edwards's remarks were "merely the outcome of his wounded vanity. He is endeavouring to work against us, but I think we can cut the ground from under his feet by getting the support of certain sections of D.2. before he can chip in."

How different from the cordial relations of 1896. Despite the misunderstanding between the two unions the Classification Act was amended in 1901, and tempers cooled a little.

The Institute members were annoyed on hearing a rumour that Society delegates had declared to the Minister that it was unfair that officers' salaries were paid during conference, while the wages of Society men ceased, even though the latter represented the entire staff. The Society preferred to pay the wages of delegates in which case they were not able to be blamed for wasting public funds. Mr. Robieson, the Wellington secretary of the R.O.I. accused the sister union of a "dog-in-the-manger" attitude. Society members did not desire the privilege for themselves and yet they wanted the Institute to be deprived of it. In any case he challenged Mr. Edwards to prove that the A.S.R.S. numbered a fifth of the staff on its roll.

A year later, when the Superannuation Bill was before the House, the two societies co-operated in bidding for the support

of the public and of the news-papers and in giving evidence before Parliamentary committees. A general feeling of satisfaction was shared when these efforts were rewarded with success.

One of the chief difficulties in running a common paper was that many men desired to have printed therein, letters of personal attacks on the officers. This personal aspect of the relations between officers and men was the cause of many of the differences between the two railway societies. The outside worker suspected the intentions of the clerical worker and the indoor man. The problem of establishing a truer understanding between these different types of workers is one that has engaged the attention of those interested in labour problems in general. It is to be hoped that the railway societies can solve the difficulty, in which case they will have solved a problem that prevents any real co-operation between all classes of workers.

The R.O.I. did not have the same close relationship with outside labour organisations that the early Society had. Quite often, however, the Executive of the R.O.I. corresponded with the executives of other civil service unions in the colony, especially the "Post and Telegraph Society" and "The Public Service Association", and with railway organisations in Australia and prominent railwaymen in England. In 1897 Mr. Monk brought up, in the House of Representatives, the question of the granting of Crown lands to public servants. Many of the public service societies were interested but the R.O.I. felt that the attitude of the House was unfavourable and in July, 1898, the Executive decided to take no action.

The Institute was not behindhand in assisting those in distress in the colony. In 1896 £218.1.1. was sent to the fund for the

relief of the Brunner miners after a severe mine disaster.

The officers were wide awake to developments in the colony and urged the Department to provide facilities, modern in every respect. One way to ensure a really fine railway service was to employ a contented staff. The years after 1896 saw the return of better times, much social legislation was carried in Parliament and railwaymen were determined to share the benefits of prosperity. " By 1899 it was clear that the experimental laws and their administration had not ruined the country and were not going to do so. The Liberal Labour was generally accepted " (38)

As was the custom in the Society, so in the Institute the delegates at the annual conferences met both the General Manager and the Minister of Railways, with whom they discussed grievances. The main items of discussion were wages, overtime, free passes, privilege tickets, uniforms, the provision of station masters' houses, meeting rooms for the staff, the constitution and procedure of the Appeal Board, promotion and grading, the employment of casual clerks, leave of absence and sick leave. Year in and year out the same demands were made and small concessions gained.

In 1897 both General Manager and Minister suggested that all individual grievances of first division men be represented through the R.O.I. How different an attitude from that of Mr. Maxwell in 1882!

The Appeal Board was a much discussed institution. In 1895 the Minister declared that he could see no reason why the demands that officers in both islands should be eligible to sit on both

Boards, and that in the case of a member being personally concerned in an appeal, his place should be filled temporarily by the corresponding member on the Board of the other island, should not be met. To abolish the veto of the Minister would require amending legislation. In 1897 it was decided to appoint or elect some members of each branch of the R.O.I. at each main centre, who would be agreeable to act on behalf of the appellants in the same manner as the Department's representative. It was also requested that railwaymen, who were not a class used to appearing in the law courts, might have the assistance of legal advisers during an Appeal Board hearing. In 1899 the Department could not grant this, which would tend to increase expenses of appellants. In 1901 the Department agreed that in appeal cases only relevant evidence would be demanded, that upon application, a copy of all evidence taken at a Departmental inquiry would be supplied to appellants and that the official designation and location of nominees for election to the Board would be shown on ballot papers. The veto was still retained by the Minister until 1927.

The majority of cases brought to the Appeal Board were the protests against unfair classification and irregular promotions. When the delegates, in 1897, expressed dissatisfaction with the promotion system the Minister stated that there was always the Appeal Board. The Minister was frequently asked to remove anomalies in the classification list, but perhaps the main question in regard to grading of members was that of transfer from Division 2 to Division I. The A.S.R.S. desired easier conditions of transfer, the officers were determined to limit the number of transfers. In this the latter were selfish, for the man able to fulfil the difficult conditions of transfer must have been

possessed of ability and of the type to make a good officer. In 1898 the General Manager asked the two societies to work out proposals on the question. The R.O.I. was willing to make recommendations only after the A.S.R.S., which was desirous of a change, had submitted proposals. Neither society would take the initiative and no joint action was taken. The A.S.R.S. submitted proposals without consulting the R.O.I., which thereupon criticised recommendations of the Society and forwarded some of its own. The Institute demanded that only those with qualifications necessary for D.I. work be eligible, while the A.S.R.S. desired that the question of eligibility be left open. The Institute declared that another A.S.R.S. demand would allow all outside men in the traffic department to go over junior clerks and cadets to clerical positions. The Society's proposal that Coaching and Goods Foremen be selected, in all cases, from D.2. was regarded as unjust and selfish, while the suggestion that station-masters be chosen alternatively from each division was impracticable, since D.2. station-masters could only be placed at large centres, where a clerical staff was provided to do routine work. The officers proposed that those transferring to D.I. must have educational qualifications of the standard required of D.I. applicants, that when transferred, such officers be paid at a salary not exceeding the sum paid to an employee who originally entered D.I., no transfers were to be made after the employee had been five years in the service except as provided in special cases, when he was to be placed at the bottom of the list. The following year the Institute resolved that a D 2 man, from the date when he received his certificate of eligibility, should rank for promotion equal with a clerk of grade 7 and a maximum of 25% of station masters

were to be appointed from D.2.

The question of annual leave was an important one. In 1895 the ordinary leave was seventeen days per year, but there was disuniformity in practice in the granting of leave. In 1897 a great step forward was taken when the Department agreed that leave might accumulate and two years leave be taken together. In 1899 the General Manager promised to institute, as far as possible a universal half-holiday each week.

The issue of free passes was a subject of continual discussion. The second division men received second class passes, the first first class passes. In 1895, after the former had suggested that the issue of passes should be uniform, a movement to make all passes second class had grown. The officers, naturally, did not wish to forego their first class pass and the General Manager said that he did not desire such a step. The officers were dissatisfied with the system of issue, passes could only be issued from Head Office and delay might mean the loss of many day's leave. In 1903 officers in each island were empowered to issue passes over all the main trunk lines in their island.

The Department was regularly asked to provide buildings where employees could meet, house libraries, hold discussions and social gatherings. The English Railway Companies and other colonial lines had accepted the principle and it was felt to be a slur if New Zealand were behindhand in any industrial schemes. Meeting in hotels, the only places under the existing system, was undesirable in every way. The General Manager and the Manager agreed that the provision of meeting rooms was very desirable, but expenses had to be kept low. There were so many absolutely necessary improvements to be made that meeting rooms must wait.

This problem of finance was the obstacle to the realisation of many of the Institute's demands, not only in regard to wages, but also in regard to the provision of decent accomadation in the houses of station-masters and in the provision of uniforms for station-masters and others who came into direct contact with members of the travelling public. The conditions of many of the houses, in which the station-masters had no option but to live, were very bad and progress was very slow in their improvement. Parliament was always very cautious in increasing the railway expenditure and the Minister had to insist on the attitude of Parliament in all his promises to the railway unions.

The officers were responsible for the efficient organisation of the service and submitted many proposals for its improvement. They frequently asked that some encouragement in the way of promotion be given to those who passed higher examinations outside the service. Until the amendment of the classification system in 1901 such had been provided and the officers considered that some new regulation should deal with this matter. Another problem was that of the fine system. This placed a black mark on the employee's record and was very unpopular. The officers suggested that it be replaced by a system in operation on many American lines, the Brown system of discipline, which encouraged a man to clear his record of any blemishes. This system was effective in producing a better relationship between master and man.

Such a cordial relationship is essential for the successful conduct of any enterprise. In the opinion of New Zealand railway employees the provision of adequate classification and superannuat systems would contribute most effectively to a harmonious relationship between Department and men .

CLASSIFICATION , INSURANCE , COMPENSATION AND SUPERANNUATION

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SCHEMES UNTIL THE " GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS SUPERANNUATION

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FUND ACT " 1902

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Chapter 6.

The organisation of the R.O.I. grew out of the agitation, mainly on the part of the officers, for a classification of the railway staff, similar to that of the Post and Telegraph officers. Officers declared that they were not soundly classified, but simply grouped or classed for convenience in dealing with them.

The Post and Telegraph men were classified in 1893 and on <sup>21<sup>st</sup></sup> September 1893, a meeting of railwaymen was held in the Auckland Railway Station at which twenty-eight men, representing five departments, were present. It was unanimously decided to appoint a committee to take up the question of obtaining a satisfactory classification of railway officers on the lines of the Postal Department classification of July 1893. Having elected a committee (39) it was agreed that other centres be asked to do likewise, since it was believed that the movement would gain general support.

At the time a change in the management of the Railways was rumoured and this question of control affected the progress of the movement for classification. In November, Mr. A. Duncan,

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(39) Committee : Messrs. T.R. Armstrong (Traffic Clerk), P.A. Duncan (Chief Goods Clerk), G. Aicken ( S.M. Onehunga), A.H. Mellor (Relieving Officer), A.H. Munro (Booking Clerk), J. Young (Chief Clerk Resident Engineer's Office ), J.R. Boswell (S.M. Penrose), H. Williams (S.M. Ngauruhia), A. Duncan (S.M. Newmarket), D.A. Wright



secretary of the Auckland committee, wrote to Mr. S.J.Loring Dunedin, informing him that, though sympathetic, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill considered the time inopportune for action, which should be left until the question of control was settled in order " to obviate any possible leakage, which might result in political capital being made out of our movement to the detriment of the Commissioners." The Auckland idea was to draw up a petition to the Commissioners. Mr. Duncan declared " once we gain confidence in each other and understand the question, then there will be no arrest " He denied the charge that his committee was extravagant in its demands, and stated " We think excessive economy has been the bête-noire of the railway service since its initiation and that all who have the best interests of the service at heart, will make the betterment of railway life a labour of love." In many cases an increase of £20. in salary would raise an officer from a hand-to-mouth existence to one of comparative comfort. Mr. Duncan emphasised the necessity of keeping the matter purely departmental and, in the department, to the salaried staff. However, sister public service organisations would be asked to assist, and it might even be advisable for railway officers to join the "Public Service Association" As regards the question of control Mr. Duncan said " We, as officers, must obey any control set up in a straightforward and legal way, without taking any notice of political matters ...It is harmful to me, and to you, I am sure, to find our control being so shamefully abused, where we know how well they conducted

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(39) (S.M.Helensville), T.W.Turner (S.M.Ellerslie), W.P.Williams (Assistant Relieving Officer), J.Macdonald (S.M.Huntly), R.B.Peet (S.M. Frankton ), G.Loveday ( Clerk Newmarket Workshops).

the business of the Department. In my mind their control has been remarkable and if they pass out I should like to see a testimonial set up to show their high position."

By the beginning of 1894, the North Island officers were almost unanimous in the belief that the time had come to present the petition, but the South islanders were divided. Mr Duncan wrote frequently and insistently to Mr. Loring urging his support. The Government was contemplating a new railway bill so that the time was opportune, for the Commissioners would be likely to make improvements in the conditions of the staff. The question of control retarded the movement, but to refrain from going forward at the time would simply give the movement a political significance and make it appear that the ability of the Management was disputed. The petition would have for its object the establishment of an equitable scale of pay and an annual holiday. Many officers were satisfied as it was, but one must consider the anomalies which weighed on all. No just Government would countenance the glaring inequalities between the salaries of railway and postal officers. The station-master at Dannevirke received £180. per year, while the Post-master, for doing half the work, received £250.

Early in March, Mr. Loring informed Mr. Duncan that the movement had been approved and a committee of Messrs. Piper, Brownell, Eastier and Loring, appointed to submit a draft petition. Much time was spent in discussing the form and the occasion of presenting the petition. It was finally decided that the best method of presenting the grievances would be by a short petition to which would be affixed an explanatory letter, entrusted to delegates.

A difficulty was that among the officers, Messrs. Baxter and Pilkington at Christchurch, were unfavourable to the scheme. It was true that officers were not well-paid, but the time was inopportune, for in Canterbury trade was depressed, and applications for employment numerous. Society men were strong and received the support of the Commissioners. The question of insurance was more important and might be prejudiced by the classification movement. The government had refused the farmers' plea for reduced grain rates so that the farmers would oppose the officers' demands. The Commissioners were desirous of keeping expences down.

Mr. Duncan's reply to these demands is interesting since it represents the attitude of his committee on the question. He thought that it might occur to the Christchurch men that it would benefit the service generally were all chief officers to confer with their subordinates on matters affecting the general welfare, and, after conferring together, where there was a majority in favour of calling attention to a grievance, the officers should act for the men. Nothing tended more to solidarity than a kindly interest on the part of the officers in their juniors. District considerations should not be allowed to stand in the way of the welfare of the service as a whole, provincial aims were too narrow. No matter what organisations were formed there would be applications for employment. Low wages if not "living wages" retarded progress, for the men willing to accept these were forced into meanness and perhaps dishonesty. Officers should not, as officers, fear what the outdoor staff might possibly do, nor subordinate their opinions to the latter's. They could command respect only by acting with dignity. If the men felt happier by belonging to a union, by all means let them. Unions, properly

conducted, had been productive of much good between capital and labour. The men could have no objection to the officers' demands. Classification, settled permanently by law, would benefit men and officers alike. The men looked after themselves, the officers were too submissive. He, himself, was chairman of a local committee for insurance and did not see that the two conflicted. If the classification movement did nothing more than bring officers on a level with other, that, in itself, would be a great gain. The farmers might be compensated by a good crop in the next season, the officers laboured under permanent difficulties and would have to depend on their own efforts for compensation. Even if the Commissioners did insist on economy, yet the demands of the officers were justifiable, the burdens were real and pressing.

Despite these arguments and appeals from other centres the Christchurch officers were not convinced and Mr. Loring and others had to undertake the task of distributing the petition from Hurunui to Bluff. Mr. Duncan, in May, was considering a delegation, should the petition fail; He did not anticipate any immediate benefits other than in the lowest grades, but he had high hopes for the future. Mr. Hudson, District Traffic Manager at Auckland, informed Duncan that the Commissioners would receive the petition direct, instead of the regular manner through the District officer, but they could see no reason for the presentation of the petition in person.

I have been unable to discover if, and how, the petition was presented. In any case nothing eventuated. At the end of 1894, the Commissioners were replaced in control, by Mr. J.A. Cadman, the first Minister of Railways in the colony. The officers continued to discuss classification proposals, based on a comparison with

the postal classification. A system of enforcing a certain percentage of higher positions was considered to be the only worthwhile system, in other cases the higher offices would be left vacant. Classification schemes, all over the world, were examined and advice asked of men in other countries, eg. Mr. Halliwell, an Audit Inspector on the Great Western line in England.

The first business of the R.O.I. councillors in 1895, was that of classification. Messrs. Faris, Styles, Brownell, Morgan, Mellor, Macdonald and P.A. Duncan were elected a sub-committee to deal with the matter. The bases of their deliberations were to be the current rates of pay and where these were similar, seniority of service, and the present responsibility of positions. The Council went into committee and discussed the proposals of the sub-committee and Messrs. Faris, Styles, Mc. Villy and Mellor were appointed a committee to go into questions of classification compensation and restitution of rights, during the recess. The scheme adopted by the Council provided an automatic system of promotion, which, while reserving to the Management the right of objecting to a candidate on the score of unfitness, at the same time protected the rights of the individual by recognising seniority of service. The scheme aimed, particularly, at raising the lower grades.

At the interview with the Minister on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1895, the bone of contention was the classification scheme, which Mr. Mellor introduced. As was anticipated, the scheme was too comprehensive and involved the adoption of too many new principles to admit of an immediate answer. Mr. Cadman recognised the anomalous position of railwaymen as compared with postal men but declared that the matter was one of E.S.D. and he would have

to convince both Cabinet and Parliament.

The A.S.R.S. councillors in 1896 resolved " This conference considers the present system of classification obnoxious, unsatisfactory and calculated to give rise to anomalies in the service. " Classes were the block to advancement and the delegates wanted " class wiped off the books and the way made clear for honest advancement, based on length of service, qualifications and good conduct." Among the proposals to be submitted to the Management were those demanding that application for appointment, should be made to the General Manager, if a man were appointed he should undergo a period of three years probation, during which time he could be dismissed at a week's notice, but after which he was either to be dismissed or to become a permanent employee, increase in salary and promotion were to depend on length of service , good conduct and attention to duties, and were liable to be disallowed for insubordination and neglect of duty.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1896, the Classification committee of the R.O.I., together with one of the A.S.R.S. ( Messrs. Edwards, Brown, Burrows, Elvines, Ferguson, Forsyth, Puttick and Handisides) interviewed the Minister, General and Assistant General Managers of Railways with regard to a railway classification bill. The committees were given time to examine the bill and at a final meeting with the Minister the Bill was discussed, clause by clause and a number of amendments proposed, some of which were accepted. The bill, though not perfect, did remove many of the worst anomalies and was accepted by the committees as a step in the right direction. The Minister agreed to sponsor the measure only if he was assured of the unanimous support of the staff.

The Executive of the Institute pursued every course which might secure the support of Members of Parliament for the bill.

In every district, these were asked to give their support. Most were sympathetic, believing that employees should not be at the mercy of the employer. Mr. J.G. Ward, who later succeeded Mr.

Cadman as minister, wrote promising his support, at the same time reminding the men that the bill might not give all that was desired, but perfection could only be the result of time.

When he brought down the measure in the House, the Minister, Hon. J.A. Cadman declared that the aim was to classify the whole civil service, a bill, introduced previously by Mr. Ballance, had been thrown out and it had, therefore, been necessary to do the work piece-meal. The present bill had to be considered from two points of view, that of the tax-payer and that of the railway man. The majority of the members favoured the bill, believing that the men should be well paid. The Leader of the Opposition, Captain Russell of Hawke's Bay, approved the principle of high wages but attacked the ministerial control, which ended in nepotism. Mr. Seddon, the Premier, defended ministerial control and expressed his unqualified approval of the principle of classification, which he believed would remove any cause of unrest. Other members while approving of the principle of classification, disapproved of individual items of the bill, eg. those giving control on the Appeal Board to the Minister, and giving the Government power to recommend a decrease or an increase in the railway estimates, and working on the system of promotion by seniority. In the Legislative Council, Hon. Mr. McLean of Otago, considered classification bills necessary evils, since they meant that the

good man carried the bad on his back. Mr. Jenkinson, of Canterbury, disliked the classification of men just as if they were sheep, and especially disliked the present bill because it favoured the officers against the men. There is no doubt that many railwaymen, officers, but especially the outside men, did not like the bill and this fact influenced the opinions of some Members, but the two unions had officially accepted the bill and were determined to have it passed into law. They were successful and the "Government Railways Classification Bill" became law during the session. The Minister promised that when the regulations under the Act were drawn up two representatives of each society should be consulted.

Once the act had been passed both unions began to work for its amendment. The grievances discussed at national conferences rose from the regulations under the act. The A.S.R.S. councillors in 1897, resolved that a system enforcing the employment of a definite number in the highest grades was the only possible one under the circumstances. Each society concentrated on securing a better classification of a particular class of its members every year, especially of the lower grades.

The new classification list was distributed on October 29<sup>th</sup>. 1897, and Institute members, in particular, were disappointed. An amending act was hurriedly passed on December 20, and 21. All that the vigilance committee of the R.O.I. could do was to protest against such a rushed measure. The secretary complained bitterly that all members of Parliament cared about, was to hurry off home for Christmas. The chief object of the amendment, so far as the R.O.I. was concerned, was to conserve the rights of the officers of the Civil Service from the date of transfer to the Railway Department.



Among the requests of the Institute, at the conference of 1898, were those asking that the Classification List be published so that the relative rank of each member be shown irrespective of the office filled, that, if there were a vacancy in the service, a railwayman, if there were any qualified, must be appointed; that Division 1 members should receive full pay for three months if off duty through sickness or accident; that the chief positions in the service be 'graded' and a minimum salary be allotted to each such position.

The A.S.R.S. conference of 1898, declared that its members were no better pleased with the operations of the Act then, than they had been in the past, since so many injustices were allowed and apparently fostered. The good features were outweighed by the bad, unless there were extensive and far-reaching amendments, a new scheme was absolutely necessary.

During the years 1898-1899 dissatisfaction with the working of the Classification Act grew more intense; representations to the General Manager and to the Minister of Railways were fruitless and the Officers' Institute set up a committee, Messrs Palmer, Robieson and McCartney, charged with the duty of drawing up a suitable petition for presentation to Parliament. Copies of the petition were circulated to all members of Parliament and to the newspapers but nothing more was heard of the petition until, in November 1900, it was reported that the Railways Committee of the House had referred it to the Department. Members of Parliament were constantly badgered by Railway officers, and frequently brought the matter under notice of the House until most of the grievances were remedied

through an amendment of the Law, passed on November 4, 1901.

Two extracts from letters written at that time, indicate the part played by the Railw<sup>a</sup>ymens' Unions. Mr. E. H. Field M.P. writing to the general secretary of the Officers' institute, Mr. Morpeth, " I should like to mention that the R.O.I. has earned the thanks of all classes of railway officers, by its persistent and untiring efforts to secure the introduction of the Bill this session . But for the R.O.I. I think there is little doubt that it would have been delayed another year. "

Mr. Morpeth , giving an account of the Executive's activities to Mr Styles, wrote - " - - - Meetings every other day, up at the House every night, buttonholing members till they were ready to promise everything to feel safe in their seats - - - .

The Bill is not all that is desired but then we can hammer away at improvements as we have done in the past. "

The delegates to the A.S.R.S. conference, 1902, expressed the opinion that the Act was a most material advance on its predecessor, although the alterations in regard to the Appeal Board were , perhaps , not as favourable to Division to Division 11 members as was desirable.

The 1901 Act introduced a system showing the relative rank of each employee with every other member of the service, on a length of service basis. All members of the staff could now feel that promotions and appointments would, in future, be made in a regular and just manner.

When the classification proposals were under discussion in the house, many Members had laid emphasis on the dangerous nature of the work performed by railway servants. Their duties were more responsible and the degree of personal risk greater than in any

other branch of the Public Service.

#### SUPERANNUATION:

Early in the history of the New Zealand railways the management were concerned with questions of compensation and insurance for the staff.

Under the Civil Service Pension Act of 1866, the basis of compensation was one month's pay for every year in the service. Only the staff paid on the basis of annual salary were entitled to this concession. Any officer leaving, retiring or dismissed for no fault of his own, from the service, could claim compensation, although this was not necessarily given in the case of death while on duty, since death was not regarded as retiring or leaving. By the Government Railways Act 1887 this provision relating to compensation was repealed, insofar as future members were concerned, but members who had joined the service before 1887 could be paid the amount of compensation due to them prior to the passing of the Act.

In 1896 an interesting case arose; Mr. R. Coker who joined the service in 1875, was an employee of the Railway Department in 1887 when the Permanent Railways Act came into operation. At that time he was admittedly a civil servant and entitled to compensation for loss of office under, and subject to, the Civil Service Act 1866. Mr. Coker remained in the employ of the Railway Department until April, 23, 1896. On that date he was station-master at Clinton but was then dismissed for negligence. His application for compensation, due to him and reckoned by the Audit Department, in 1891, to be £154-11-4, was refused. The Railway Officers' Institute made representations

on his behalf, these were rejected on the grounds that compensation was payable only if his office was lost through no fault of his own. A solicitor, Mr. Edwards, gave an opinion that the Government Railways Act 1887, deprived all those civil servants who became Railway employees, of their positions through no fault of their own, therefore Mr. Coker was entitled to compensation which he would have received if he had <sup>resigned</sup> in 1887. Mr. R. Stout, of Stout, Monday and Sim, agreed to represent Mr. Coker in a test action, although in his view, it was a difficult question, since by remaining in the Railway service, Mr. Coker might have lost his right to compensation for the abolition of his office under the Act of 1887. The Officers' Institute asked for a friendly action to test the case but the General Manager would not agree because the Attorney General held that the opinion of the Institute's solicitor could not be sustained. The R.O.I. was thus debarred from taking an active part in the case, but assisted Mr. Coker with funds in the test action which he took subsequently. Judgment went against Mr. Coker, the Judge holding that no accrued right existed that would hold good when an officer was dismissed through no fault of his own. Feeling had run high among those who considered that they were entitled to compensation and they levied themselves to pay the cost of Mr. Coker's action.

Officers were not pleased with their position in regard to compensation and in 1895 had urged the Minister\* to embody, in an amending Bill, a clause annulling the provisions in the Act of 1895 which perpetuated the injustice suffered by railwaymen as a result of the Railways Act 1897.

The Minister saw the force of the representation, but insisted on his need to consult his colleagues. In 1897, at the annual meeting of R.O.I. councillors with the Minister, Mr Faris pointed out the fact that the restitution of the rights of those officers who joined under the acts of 1866 and 1887, bore on the question of insurance. Under the Act 1887, those officers, who wished to continue in the service under the Commissioners, had lost status as Civil Servants. The Government Insurance Officers had had a restitution of their rights and it was only fair that the railway officers should receive like treatment. Mr Cadman declared that the officers forgot the benefits of the Act and that he, himself, did not think that they would regain their status, as under the old act, whereby men could resign and then claim compensation. Mr Faris replied that they asked for compensation, only where a man was dispensed with, through no fault of his own. In 1899 the Minister was asked to grant the old provisions of compensation, or, failing this, to agree that accrued compensation might be thrown into a superannuation scheme, to buy back the years of service. The Minister replied that there was a very strong feeling against compensation in the House, so that, even were he sympathetic, he did not think that the measure would go through.

In 1892 the A.S.R.S. had prepared a statement to be placed before the House by a member, asking whether any distinction would be drawn from the Act of 1886 by that of 1887, in regard to the granting of compensation to officers in the Department in 1886, whose salaries were payable on an annual scale, and to those permanent officials also in the service before 1887, who were paid at a daily rate. If there was a distinction, what was its nature?

The statement also drew attention to the fact that before the passing of the Act 1887, railway engine-drivers, firemen, porters, etc. received compensation on the same scale as constables and other public servants. These public servants and, indeed, firemen and engine-drivers received compensation after the Act 1887, but porters did not.

Despite such representations on the part of both railway societies little improvement was made and the payment of compensation was haphazard.

Since railwaymen looked forward, on retirement, to the receipt of compensation under the Act 1866, the whole question of compensation became bound up with that of insurance and superannuation. The official move was the proposal of a restricted form of insurance. A circular of January 1890, signed by Commissioners Mc.Kerrow, Maxwell and Hannay, set out, in detail, a railway employees' insurance scheme, under which an employee earning seven shillings a day was to contribute two shillings per week. If, through accident or illness, he was permanently disabled, after five years service and contribution, he was to receive a pension of £27. per annum, and in the case of his death, his representatives were to receive a sum of £109.

The A.S.R.S. was emphatic in its rejection of the proposal. A bill, embodying the principles of the scheme was distributed. The Society councillors in 1890 were requested to bring under the notice of all branches the absolute necessity of opposing compulsory insurance in any form. The following year the national delegates resolved " This meeting considers the Bill a direct slur on the character of railwaymen and fails to see wherein lies the

right of the Commissioners to legislation in such direction, until it is shown by their own improvidence that railwaymen are more burdensome to the state than any other portion of the community, that, having made provision for death, there exists no need for the proposed bill, and that it enter its earnest and emphatic protest against the introduction of such an arbitrary and one-sided measure, that the principle is decidedly opposed to the existing voice of the people and that, until the country is ripe for national insurance, railwaymen should be invited to join for its suppression. "Protests were made against the support of the bill by the Government. In 1892 the A.S.R.S. delegates protested against any legislation on insurance unless the same had been examined and approved by representatives of railwaymen meeting in conference. Remembering 1890, the Society men suspected any scheme of the Commissioners'.

The bill against which there was so much unreasoned complaint provided for the payment of certain benefits to contributors, or, on their death, to their representatives. A man on retirement, at the age of sixty-five years, ~~was to receive~~ a pension, for life, of one third of his salary at the date of retirement. Any contributor retiring before the age of sixty-five years, or before he had served for twenty years, ~~was to receive~~ a pension of one quarter of his salary, on retirement. On the death of a contributor, his representatives were to receive a sum equal to one month's pay for each year's service ( not Less than six months' or more than twelve months' equivalent ) at the rate payable at the time of retirement or death. The sources of the fund were to be all fines, any sum granted by Parliament for the purpose and sums to be contributed by permanent employees during their service (

for pay of 4/6 a day, a contribution of 1/- per week, and for each additional six-pence over 4/6, a contribution of two-pence extra )

In July delegates met in Wellington to consider the Act, the " Government Railways Employees Insurance Act 1892 ". (40) The meeting favoured an insurance bill, and took for its starting point the Bill 1892. It was pointed out that, although many men appreciated the benefits afforded by the bill, yet they were apathetic, for the majority were already insured. The bill was discussed, clause by clause and amendments were suggested to the Commissioners on July 21<sup>st</sup>. A deputation also waited on the Premier asking that a bill on the lines indicated by the amendments be passed during the session. The amended bill of 1893, issued while the delegates were still in Wellington, provided for a retiring age of sixty years, for relief to permanent employees, already insured, for the uniform payment, at death, of a sum equal to twelve months' pay at the rate received at death, and for the appointment of a board of contributors ( three nominated by the management and three elected by the contributors ) who should make any regulations. The bill, however, did not receive general support and no legislation was effected.

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(40). Messrs H. Pearse (Yard Foreman Auckland) representing Auckland P. L. Payne (S. M. Dannevirke) Napier, C. F. Hill (S. M. Hawera) Hawera, E. Mc. Kenna (S. M. Palmerston North) Palmerston North, Chairman, C. A. Marcus (S. M. Wanganui) Wanganui, T. E. Donne (S. M. Wellington) Wellington, Whangerei and Westport, J. McLean Wellington, J. Gray (Traffic Inspector Ch. Ch.) Christchurch and Greymouth and J. A. Efford (Carpenter Addington), W. C. Ford Timaru, W. Cairns Oamaru, J. Stuart and W. F. Sligo and J. Austin Dunedin, T. R. Barrer, A. C. Barlow, Invercargill,



The ball having been set rolling, th the Officers' Institute, in particular, rallied to the task of drawing up superannuation schemes. In October 1895, Mr. Mellor, writing to Mr. Aicken, stated that a good scheme could be drawn up on the basis of a deduction of 5 per cent from officers' salaries together with a government subsidy. No officer should receive superannuation pension for less than ten years' service, if, during that period, he retired honourably or was retrenched, contribution made by him should be refunded. After ten years service or reaching the age of retirement he should receive a pension for life, equal to one sixtieth of his average salary during the three years prior to his resignation, for each year of service; the maximum retiring allowance to be not more than half of the salary on which the allowance was computed. Retirement should be optional at sixty and compulsory at sixty five years of age. If a man resigned honourably before qualifying for a pension he should receive a refund of all premiums paid plus twenty five percent of the total. If he were discharged for a criminal offence he should be refunded merely the amount of the premiums paid by him. The Government, well known for its social legislation, should set a liberal example. The above suggestions are typical of those being discussed at that time.

At the 1896 A.S.R.S. Conference the delegates favoured a superannuation scheme provided such scheme was acceptable to members. This Conference made the following suggestions:-

- (1) Employees should have the option of retiring at the age of fifty five years if they had served for twenty five years;
- (2) Employees should have the option of retiring at sixty years of age irrespective of length of service;

- (3) Employees should be entitled to receive the full pension if incapacitated by injuries received while on duty;
- (4) Should a contributor die, his wife and family should receive a pension;
- (5) If the widow had no family she should receive two thirds of the pension that would have been due to her husband; if there were a family they should be entitled to the full pension which should cease on remarriage;
- (6) The superannuation fund to comprise (a) premiums paid by the employees, (b) Government subsidies, (c) fines and penalties inflicted upon employees;
- (7) The minimum pension to be fifteen shillings per week;
- (8) If an employee resigned from the service before reaching forty five years of age, two thirds of the premiums paid should be refunded to him, but, should he leave the service after reaching forty five years of age, he should be allowed to continue as a contributor to the fund.

In 1897, the Officers' Institute questioned the Minister of Railways concerning an insurance and superannuation scheme. He replied that the proposals in the past had met with no approval, he, himself, could not go into a scheme. On the other hand, should the Institute present a comprehensive and acceptable scheme he would not place any obstacles in the way. Accordingly, in 1898, the R.O.I. councillors discussed superannuation schemes, taking as a basis the Railway Clearing House system operating in England.

A committee, Messrs Bourke, Marcus and Styles, examined various proposals and on May 19, 1898, submitted the following proposals:-

A New Zealand railway superannuation fund was to be established and placed under the management of a committee of six members, three appointed by the state and three by the contributors. All permanent employees were to become contributors, provided that they joined the fund within twelve months of its establishment, or afterwards at the discretion of the committee. The following was the proposed scale of contributions of those joining the fund, after twelve <sup>months</sup> four members between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-four years, a yearly contribution of six percent of their salaries, paid by member and state combined, between the ages of 34 and 37 years a contribution of seven percent..... and between the ages of 43 and 46 years a contribution of ten percent.

In the cases of resignation, dismissal or death, payment was to be based on a  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  contribution; in the case of death the contributor's representative was to receive  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  refund together with 4% simple interest on the  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ . Membership was to be compulsory for all new entrants to the service. The portion of the contribution of each member was to be  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  of his salary, payable four-weekly. Any contributor who had more than ten years' service and who joined the fund in six months could have one or more years' added to his membership by paying a sum equal to  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  on his average yearly salary, together with interest, so that the fund would be in the same position as if it had been in existence at the date from which membership was to commence, for the same number of years immediately preceding his declaring his option. The state was to contribute to the fund a sum equal to the total amount of contributions, including additional subscriptions, but not interest, as above. any member leaving or dismissed the service could

receive back his contributions ( provided the reason for dismissal was not for a criminal offence ). Any member leaving, or dismissed the service through ill-health, before he had been on the fund for ten years, was to receive a sum equal to his contributions, plus 4% simple interest. Members dismissed for pecuniary fraud forfeited all claim on the fund. Should a member die before being superannuated, his representatives were to receive a sum equal to his contributions plus 4% simple interest, after being superannuated his representatives were to receive the residue of his contributions. Superannuation could be claimed at sixty years and was payable for life on a yearly scale rising from 25% of average salary for ten years contribution, to 67% for more than forty-five years contribution. Other provisions were made for continued payment by those temporarily sick, for those incapacitated through ill-health and the like. The funds were to be vested in trustees, two appointed by the state and one by the contributors.

The delegates discussed these proposals and others suggesting a return to the system of 1866, duly amended to allow members to contribute to the fund. The position of men joining the fund at the age of fifty-nine years was examined. The scheme was approved and, with a clause providing that as much as was necessary of members' compensation, might be thrown into the fund so that old members might repurchase years of service, was submitted to the Department.

The A.S.R.S. councillors in 1898, decided to do nothing on the question, since the Department had not accepted their previous scheme. The branches were, however, asked to submit any new proposals on the matter.

Although comprehensive schemes had been drawn up by both unions no action was taken by the Department. Yet again in 1900, the A.S.R.S. councillors adopted and submitted a new scheme, much on the lines of the amended bill of 1893. The staff were determined to go ahead.

In 1900, all efforts were engaged in the classification amendment struggle, with which the superannuation question was closely connected. It was demanded in the House that proposals on both questions should be brought down during the session. The classification question was the subject of legislation, but superannuation once again was neglected. Nevertheless the Minister was working on the problem and his proposals were embodied in a bill published in December 1901.

In the December "Quarterly Report" of the R.O.I., members were urged earnestly to consider the bill, especially the younger ones to whom the bill was of more importance. Members were reminded that, if the scheme was to be financially sound, no one could expect to receive more than what he had paid into the fund, plus a subsidy, due allowance being made for natural increase by interest and for the expences of management. An idea was abroad, especially among the older men, that once the Act was passed, they would be able to retire on a pension of twenty to thirty shillings a week, but these must remember that the age was a practical and not a quixotic one. All members were urged to place their views before Members of Parliament. Railwaymen of all ranks were impressed with the liberality of the provisions, but there could be some improvements, in particular in the case of older employees

The Minister on July 4<sup>th</sup>.1902, in moving that the bill be

read a second time in the House , explained his motives in bringing down such a measure. Railway servants performed responsible and dangerous duties and some provision was necessary for those incapacitated through illness or old age. His scheme was based on that in operation on the North Western Railway in England, which had been eminently successful from a practical, if not from an actuarial, point of view. Under his scheme the staff should contribute 3% and the State 3/ towards a retiring fund.

Members, in the discussion which followed, showed that they approved a system whereby help was afforded those who helped themselves. The main opposition came from Mr. Millar of Dunedin( later Minister of Railways ) who declared that the scheme would simply revive the bad old pension scheme condemned in 1884. A joint committee of four members of the A.S.R.S. and of the R.O.I. waited both on the Minister and the Select Committee of the House, with the result that the bill was amended in many ways.

The A.S.R.S. councillors in 1902 considered the provisions of the bill in detail and their recommendations were those embodied in the amendments of the Legislative Council. Under the original provisions a member , on retirement, was to receive an allowance for life, based on his average annual salary during the years when he contributed to the fund. To retire under the fund a man had to be not less than sixty years of age and to have been in the service for at least twenty-five years. The position of the older man was, then, serious. Should a contributor die as a result of injuries received while on duty, his widow, during widowhood, was to receive a pension of £18 per year, with an additional five shillings for each child up to the age of fourteen years.

Delegates to the conference declared that they had been led to understand that the Government would arrange that, as members arrived at the retiring age they could be pensioned off in receipt of a full allowance as though they had paid in from the first. The money for such payment was to have been voted out of the public account to the Insurance Department. It was also considered that the provision allowing officers to buy back service with compensation money, precluded an equitable arrangement in regard to those joining the fund.

The main proposals were those suggesting a different scale of contributions, a different composition of the Superannuation Board ( one first division and two second division representatives for each island ), and that not the years of contribution but the years of service were to be counted in the computation of allowances.

The members of the Legislative Council, on the whole approved the principle of the bill and hoped to see its extension throughout the entire Public Service at least. There could be some improvements in different items of the measure, especially in regard to the position of the employees of private railway companies which might be taken over by the Government, in regard to men who were dismissed, or who died soon after retirement, in regard to the scale of contributions, now altered to meet the Society's proposal, and finally in regard to the constitution of the Superannuation Board.

A select Committee of the Council interviewed representatives of the railway unions, as a result of which meeting several amendments were made. In the event of a private company being

taken over by the Government, the length of service of any employee, which was to be counted for superannuation purposes, was not to include service under the company; the composition of the staff representation on the Board was to be three members for division two and two for division one ( one for each island); should a widow desire she was to be able to draw in a lump sum her husband's contributions and compensation, the scale of contribution was to run from a contribution of four per cent for a man of thirty-five years to one of 10% for a man of fifty years or more, rising in the order 5%, 6%, 7%, 10% for each five years' increase in age. The bill, thus amended, was thought to be very acceptable and it was believed that anything lost in the way of increased railway expenditure would be saved in pensions.

The House did not approve of some of these amendments, especially that dealing with the position of private company men, but as the Council was insistent on the acceptance of all the amendments objections were dropped and the bill became law on the last day of September.

As the " Government Railways Superannuation Fund Act " now stood, the uniform scale of the original scheme had been replaced by a sliding scale varying in accordance with the age of the contributor when joining the fund. Superannuation allowances were to be based on length of service and not of contribution. Every contributor, who had been in the service not less than forty years and who was not less than sixty years of age, could retire, after giving three months' notice of intention to do so, on the following conditions; for every year of service he was to receive one sixtieth of his annual rate of pay, provided that this allowance should not be more than two-thirds of such annual rate of pay.



An employee, incapacitated through sickness, was granted the right, subject to the Minister's consent, to retire " medically unfit " under the following conditions:- Where the retiring allowance was computed on the basis of pay, such pay was deemed to be the rate received at the time of retirement, unless within the previous five years, he had served in any lower grade, in which case his pay was deemed to be the average of the rate received during the seven years prior to retirement. When a contributor's pay was temporarily reduced or when he suffered a reduction in status as a result of ill-health, his retiring allowance was to be computed on the maximum rate of pay received before such reduction.

Instead of provision for a Government subsidy, the Act provided that the Government guarantee the Superannuation Fund. Replying to critics of the financial soundness of this provision, Sir Joseph Ward said "The security of the State is behind it." It was provided that, in the event of the Fund being, at any time, unable to meet the charges upon it and as often as such occurred, the Board should report the fact to the Colonial Treasurer, setting forth the amount and causes of the deficiency. The Colonial Treasurer, upon being satisfied that the deficiency existed and provision was necessary therefore, should, without further appropriation other than the Act, 1902, pay into the Superannuation Fund out of the Consolidated Fund, a sum sufficient to meet the deficiency.

The enactment of the Bill occasioned among railwaymen, general rejoicing. Soon, however, hopes were dampened when the Department issued circular 02/54 in which it was stated - - -

" members should not overlook the fact that in all cases their retiring allowance will be computed on continuous service with the Department since the date of last joining the service."

This prejudiced the position of strikers and men with provincial service. In February 1903, the General Manager declared that there had never been any intention to count broken service for superannuation purposes.

With regard to superannuation the Minister, Sir J.G.Ward, stated, in the Railway Statement, July 1903, " I am pleased to record the fact that employees are giving practical demonstration of their appreciation of the Government Railways' Superannuation Fund, which came into operation on the first of January 1903." Employees in the service at the time of the passing of the Act had been given the option of joining the fund before the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1903. No less than 3586 members of the staff, representing 57% of the permanent staff had become contributors to the fund by March 30<sup>th</sup> 1903. As railwaymen would not be entitled to compensation or other allowances in the future, they were urged to take every advantage offered by the Fund. " The condition of the fund is highly satisfactory and the Board has every confidence as to its stability and future prosperity. "

Payments from the Fund did not commence until April 30<sup>th</sup> 1903. Some curious cases resulted. Mr. J.A.Mc.Cullough, a member of the present Legislative Council and a past member of the Arbitration Board and of the A.S.R.S., recounts the story of one old employee who was forced to remain at work until the day of the paying out of the Fund. He did no work, merely sat on a stool in the Adding-ton Workshops, watched over by the local ardent superannuation enthusiasts, who were determined that he should receive an allowance

After retirement the old man lived for many years in enjoyment of his allowance.

There had been a Police Provident Fund in operation from December 1889, but the railways pioneered the Superannuation Fund system known in New Zealand today.

One Member, when speaking in the House at the time of the second reading of the Bill, had declared that the provision of such a fund would minimise the possibility of strikes. This has been proved in fact. Railwaymen, especially those nearing retirement, have always hesitated to strike work, for in such a case service is broken and many years lost for superannuation purposes. At the same time the Government, when confronted with demands for higher wages, has had recourse to the rejoinder that any difference between low and high wages is accounted for by the large sums paid by the State into the Fund.

Thus the Superannuation Fund has had important and varied results on the position of railwaymen.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RAILWAY UNIONS IN THE SOCIAL  
 -----  
 AND INDUSTRIAL LIFE OF NEW ZEALAND UNTIL 1903.  
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Chapter 7.

" The Government Railways Superannuation Fund Act " 1902, was a measure of great importance not only for railwaymen, but also for public servants in general, in the colony. The provisions of the Act were instrumental in improving the relations between railway employees and their management, a feeling of contentment was shared by officers and men. Such an attitude, inevitably, had important results for the community as a whole. Until the twenties of the present century, the railways, undoubtedly, had a monopoly of the transport facilities in New Zealand. If railwaymen were so dissatisfied that they were willing to strike work, the entire trade of the colony must suffer. It was, therefore, essential that the railway staff should be more or less contented with the conditions under which they worked.

"The conclusion cannot be escaped that one of the supreme tests of a successfully conducted railroad system is the extent to which willing co-operation exists between the management and the workers " (41) Whether a feeling of mutual goodwill is best effected by individual or by collective agreements between men and management is a disputed question, but, to my mind, the collective agreement is more natural and productive of most good. Association of men with like interests is inevitable, It is more probable that a management working on the basis of demands decided upon by a recognised body of the men's representatives,

will win a readier obedience than one working on individual suggestions. The employee will feel that his employer, recognising his right to combine, is doing what he can to do him justice.

" The processes of personnel, administration, the adjustment of wage rates, the establishment of proper working conditions and the control of disciplinary methods are much better furnished through a system of conferences between duly elected spokesmen for the workers and representatives of the management." (42)

American railroad magnates have recognised the need for a closer and more wholesome relationship with their employees. English railway companies have also been obliged to recognise the right of their men to combine. New Zealand railway workers early realised the need of union amongst themselves and their first well established union was founded on the lines of the A.S. R.S. " at home ". In England, at the time, the majority of the railway directors were opponents of trade unions of their men. " You might as well have trade unions or American societies in the army, where discipline has to be kept at a very high standard, as have them on the railways " said one magnate, quoted by Mr. J. Cliffe in an article in the " Journal of the Institute of Transport, London ". Acting in this spirit some companies dismissed servants, who gave evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1892. The managements were thereupon called before the bar of the House for committing a breach of privilege. Apart from the North Eastern Railway Company, which in 1889,

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(41) and (42) "The Railway Age " October 13, 1923, p 656.

agreed to treat with the railway unions, these were not recognised during the period under discussion. A strong movement, having for its object the recognition of the railway unions by the railway companies, made headway in England. (43)

The New Zealand A.S.R.S. was recognised by the management in 1890, but as a result of its participation in the struggle of that year, recognition was withdrawn. Four years later, however, recognition was once more obtained. Later railway unions, once the Department has been convinced that the need for these is really felt, have received recognition also. In this respect unions in the colony have enjoyed benefits not shared by their colleagues at home in England. As in many aspects of life the conditions in the colony necessitated new developments of the old institutions. At the time when the first railway unions in New Zealand were founded, a Liberal Government was in power on the Treasury Benches, and the unions were able to go ahead with little opposition from the railway management, in this case, the State.

Once recognition had been granted the executives of the unions were able to concentrate on the fight for better conditions especially for adequate classification of the staff and a suitable superannuation system. By 1903 these had been gained and the foundations of the railway unions firmly laid.

At that date there were two railway unions representing the railway staff, which numbered less than seven thousand men. This sectionalist tendency was early apparent among railwaymen in the colony, just as it had been in England. It was, however, a national horizontal sectionalism and not, as might be expected,

a provincial local division. Many of the railway lines had been built under the supervision of the Provincial Governments, and the employees, at least before 1870, were dominated by the spirit of provincialism typical of the colonist of the time. Yet, in 1886, the railwaymen founded the powerful A.S.R.S., an organisation with a nation-wide basis. So, too, with the Institute, the lack of any real feeling of unity among officers and men on the staff necessitated the formation of the two unions. Although New Zealanders were, as a whole, democratic, the old class and professional distinctions continued and were very real to some people. Realising the different attitude of officers and outside men, the A.S.R.S. founded to represent all railwaymen, acquiesced in the foundation of the officers' society.

The attitude of the Society, was to be vastly different, when, first the locomotive men and next the tradesmen, desired to form separate organisations. These were second division men, they should all be included in the one union, no rival organisations in the division would be brooked. Nevertheless these men persevered and today there are four railway unions in the Dominion the A.S.R.S., the R.O.I., the N.Z. Engine-drivers, Firemen's and Cleaners' association ( founded 1908, recognised 1910 ), and the N.Z. Railway Tradesmen's Association ( founded 1924 ). The seeds of this sectionalism were planted before 1903.

Side by side with this sectionalist tendency was the desire to achieve the formation of the ideal of the founders of the A.S.R.S., one union for railwaymen. The training in co-operation, the realisation of the need to sink personal desires for the sake of the general welfare, has been, and is being, gained in the ranks of the different unions, and it is hoped that the result

will be the formation of the one union desired so long. Had not the early enthusiasts persevered, the possibility of ever founding a strong and united railway union in New Zealand might have been delayed even more than it has been.

Another important factor in the history of the railway unions in the colony has been the relations of the unions with the railway management, the State. For several years the railways were controlled by almost independent Commissioners, responsible to the Cabinet, but the usual form of control was through a Cabinet Minister. Every item of railway policy had to be reviewed in the House. The whole relationship between Department and unions was made complex by the system of state ownership and direct ministerial control of the railways. Opponents of state control in the early days were unable to judge apart, the ideals of the unions, The issues in regard to the position of the unions were confused. It is not my place to discuss the merits or otherwise of the Ministerial control, but one can quote the words of Mr. J.B. Condliffe " There has been a little political log-rolling but there are no railway companies to dominate politics. Mistakes have been made in plenty.... but there has been no problem of rebates or concessions to interlocking economic interests " (44 )

Since every railway measure was discussed in Parliament, railwaymen took a keen interest in politics. Parliament could, and frequently did, counter any demand for increased wages to railwaymen, with the reply that such involved a probable increase not only to railwaymen and other civil servants, but possibly to workers generally in the colony. Although railwaymen have been so vitally interested in the attitude of the Members of Parliament



towards railway legislation, they have not voted as a body. The unions have, of course, indirectly influenced the votes of their members. There is no reason that railwaymen should be deprived of their votes, as many early opponents prophesied, for they have their sense of justice and fair play as well as other men. It is not likely that Members would be absolutely influenced by the unjust aspirations of the railwaymen, organised in their unions, in regard to any matters before Parliament.

The unions have done much to improve the conditions of railway work and for such work they deserve the thanks of the community which has benefited by the better service and the improved efficiency in the work of a more contented staff, whose wages they provide. Railways meant so much in the opening up of New Zealand that the importance of an efficient railway service was inestimable.

Not only have the unions helped to effect a better spirit in the relation of man to management, a service now recognised by the Department, but in improving the conditions and morale of the railway staff, they have contributed to the general moral development of the community. The New Zealand railwayman makes up a large section of the working population and his ability and efficiency has been of a high standard. The unions have done no little in bringing about such a state of affairs. They have always supported the provision of meeting places and social halls for the staff and were ever desirous of securing the establishment of libraries, etc. for the employees. Today, handsome buildings, for these purposes have been built all over the Dominion, years of persistent agitation have been rewarded

with success . Individual representations would never have achieved such results.

One of the chief factors in the formation of the R.O.I. was the classification movement. The unions have held, tenaciously to the classification system. Persistent agitation has resulted in the removal of many anomalies and injustices. The unions have been criticised for their advocacy of a system of promotion by seniority rather than by merit. Ideally, the only system is that of promotion by merit and this has, of course, been recognised by the unions. The matter is not so simple in practice, for in an enterprise so complex as the railway service it is almost impossible to work a system of promotion for merit. The question of adequately deciding on a standard of merit has baffled many enthusiasts. The main object of the unions is to gain for members a better standard of life. Necessarily their work has been to raise the standard of the lowest paid and to ensure a reasonable chance of promotion to all. Since the system of promotion by merit presents so many difficulties, the unions have chosen the next best, the system of promotion by seniority, as being the most preferable under the circumstances. It is true that a good man may be penalised by such a system and that the unions may be partly responsible for such a state of affairs. On the other hand it is doubtful if a more fair system would have been practised had there been no railway unions to protect the rights of the staff.

The history of the railway unions is closely related to that of the unions in general in the colony. Railwaymen play an important part in the social and industrial life of the Dominion.

During the period under review, the most active part played by the railway unions was that of 1890. In that year New Zealanders were clearly shown the vital significance, which the action of railway unionists could have for the community. The threatened nation-wide stoppage of trade as a result of a strike of railway employees, demonstrated, for all to see, how great was the potential strength of the railway union. After 1894, the railway unions were forbidden to have direct connections with outside political and industrial organisations, but railway men were wide awake to industrial movements, which they could support as individuals, if not as members of organised unions. The railway union recovered more quickly than the other unions from the debacle of 1890. They were not slow to take advantages of the benevolent attitude of the Government and they were able to secure a superannuation system, which was copied by the other departments of the Public Service and employers generally. The hard won victory of railway unionists was, in this case, truly a source of gain to countless other citizens.

So, in many ways, the railway unions, even in the days of beginnings, played an important part in the life of the colony. The struggle of the early enthusiasts was a real and keen one, and although success was determined partly by economic, social and political conditions in the colony, yet their spirit provided the inspiration and the driving force which led to success. To be a unionist, anywhere, and especially in a state department, meant much bitter and unreasoned opposition and a man had to be firm in his enthusiasm to stand by his convictions. The pioneering work of the founders finds ample justification in the material and cultural advantages which are enjoyed by railway servants today and which it alone made possible of achievement.

APPENDIX A. DELEGATES TO NATIONAL CONFERENCES A.S.R.S.  
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 AND OFFICERS A.S.R.S. 1890- 1902.  
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OFFICERS SEPTEMBER 1886.  
 -----

Chairman : Mr.J.Smith Vice-Chairmen : Messrs Cameron &  
 -----  
 L.Campbell. Secretary : Mr.C.Leek. Treasurer : Mr.S.Moulden.  
 -----

Committee : Messrs. Drackenbridge, T.Robertson, Sullivan, T Wade,  
 -----  
 Mc.Farlane, J.Campbell and P.Neville.

Trustees ; Messrs. Smith, Donnelly and Wilkinson.  
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OFFICERS MARCH 1887  
 -----

President : Mr.McGregor Vice-President Mr. Campbell  
 -----

Secretary : Mr.Spratt ( replaced April by Mr.J.A.Cleave)  
 -----

Treasurer : Mr.S.Moulden. Auditors: Messrs. Arnold & Otway.  
 -----

Committee : Messrs. Peat, Neville,Wade, L.Campbell,J.Robertson,  
 W.Edwin, L.Otway, W.Eggleston, J.Lowe, L.Mc.Donald, W.States, H.  
 Mc.Veigh, W.Absolam, L.Mc.Grath, J.Lownes, J.Sullivan, S.Harrison,  
 C.Leek, W.Tait, J.Bryant.

OFFICERS MAY 1888.  
 -----

President : Mr.Lowe Vice-President Mr.Halstedt  
 Secretary Mr.Cleave Treasurer : Mr.S.Moulden.  
 Auditors: Messrs Beamish & Halstedt.

OFFICERS JUNE 1889  
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President : Mr.Williamson. Vice-President : Mr.Manning.

## II.

General-Secretary ; Mr.J.Edwards. Branch Secretary Mr.A.Cleave  
Treasurer : Mr.S.Moulden.

### DELEGATES A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE 1890

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Messrs. Hoban (Christchurch), Gibbons, Winter, Jenkinson, Newton,  
Handisides, Owen, Elvines and Rae (Christchurch), J.Lowe(Auckland),  
M.Hibden(Napier), R.Hayden(Wanganui), E.Woods(Palmerston North),  
J.Dobson(Wellington), J.Puttick(Timaru), R.Stewart(Oamaru), L.  
Harris(Dunedin), G.Patterson(Invercargill), J.Cherrrie(Westport),  
W.Gulliver(Greymouth) and J.Edwards(General Secretary).

### OFFICERS ELECTED 1890 (NATIONAL OFFICERS)

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President : Mr.Hoban Vice-President Mr.Owen.  
Secretary : Mr.Edwards Treasurer : Mr.Rae.  
Committee : Messrs. Handisides, Winter, Newton, Archer, Gibbons,  
Stewart, Puttick, Elvines and Hayden.

### DELEGATES A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE APRIL? 1891.

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Messrs. Newton, Dawson, Hulbert, Marshall, Handisides, (Canterbury)  
Earnshaw M.P. (Otago), Puttick(Timaru), Skinner (Wellington),  
Newton(Palmerston North), Robertson(Wanganui), Bennet(Greymouth),  
Cairns(Oamaru), and Messrs Hoban, Edwards and Rae, (President,  
Secretary and Treasurer).

### NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1891 .

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President : Mr.Hoban Vice-President : Mr.Handisides.  
Secretary : Mr.Edwards Treasurer Mr.Rae.  
Committee : Messrs. Dawson, Campbell Aickell (Locomotive Departmen  
Hulbert?Bulloch (Workshops), Puttick(Permanent Way), Hobbs, Burrows  
(Traffic) Each committee man was also to represen a particular

DELEGATES TO THE A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE, AUGUST 1892.

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Messrs. Hoban, Edwards, (President and Secretary) Skinner (Wellington Blake (Wanganui), Cook (Midland and Greymouth), Newton (Palmerston North) and the following M.P.s., acting on behalf of the various branches, Taylor, Tanner, Sandford and Joyce (Canterbury), Earnshaw (Otago), Hall-Jones (Timaru), Pinkerton (Oamaru), Kelly (Invercargill), Hutchison (Nelson), Lawry (Auckland), Smith (Napier) and Hogg (Picton)

NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1892.

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President : Mr. Hoban                      Vice-President : Mr. Handisides.  
 Secretary : Mr. Edwards                  Treasurer : Mr. Rae.  
 Committee : Messrs. Burrows, Hulbert, Bullock, Hobbs, Scott, Raffles

DELEGATES TO THE A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE OCTOBER 1894.

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Messrs. Handisides, Bullock and Edwards (Executive Officers), Lee, Knight (Auckland), Morral (Napier), Woods (Wellington), Wilson (Palmerston North), Ferguson (Wanganui), Winter, Haden? Hobbs (Canterbury), Puttick (Timaru), Eccles (Oamaru), Thomas (Invercargill), Nicholson, Carter, Londin, Lawson (Otago), Griffiths (Nelson), Peek (Picton), McMeekin (Midland).

NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED NOVEMBER 1894.

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President : Mr. Handisides.                  Vice-President Mr. Bullock.  
 Secretary : Mr. Edwards                      Treasurer : Mr. Haden.  
 Committee : Messrs. Burrows, Hulbert, Hobbs, Forsyth, Flowers, Brown, Owen and Lwellan.

DELEGATES TO THE A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE 1896

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#### IV.

Messrs. Handisides, Bullock and Edwards (Executive Officers), Thomas (Invercargill), A.C. Truman (Timaru), T. Wilson (Palmerston North), W. Mason, C. Leek (Auckland), J. Shaw (Napier), W. Clark (Kawa Kawa and Whangerei), W. Hallwood (Wellington), N. Roulston (Wanganui), J. Cherrie (New Plymouth), R. McIlroy, G. Smith (Canterbury), H. Paton (Oamaru), P. Nicholson, J. Roberts (Otago), W. Mather (Westport), J. Orr (Midland), T. Allan (Nelson)\*

#### NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1896

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President : Mr. Handisides.                      Vice-President : Mr. Bullock  
Secretary : Mr. Edwards                      Treasurer : Mr. Elvines.  
Committee : Messrs. Payne, Puttick, Burrows, Woodham, Hobbs, Watkins, Hulbert, Biddle, Brown.

#### DELEGATES TO THE A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE 1897.

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Messrs. : Bullock (President), Puttick (V.P.), Edwards (Sec.), Hall (Napier), Thomas (Invercargill), Leek (Auckland), Rigden (Kawa Kawa, Whangerei, Dargaville), Farrant (Otago), Innes (Oamaru, Timaru), Milligan (Westport, Nelson, Picton, Midland), Lidell (Wanganui, New Plymouth), Earwaker (Canterbury), Wilson (Palmerston North, Wellington)

#### NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1897

-----

President : Mr. Bullock                      Vice-President : Mr. Hobbs.  
Secretary : Mr. Edwards                      Treasurer : Mr. Elvines.  
Committee : Messrs. Marshall, Woodbury, Chalmers, Burrows, Hiskins, Reddington, Sellars, Puttick.

#### DELEGATES TO THE A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE 1898.

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Messrs. Bullock and Edwards (Executive Officers), Leek (Auckland), Hall (Napier, Dannevirke), T. Wilson (Palmerston North, Wellington), Cherrie (Wanganui, New Plymouth), C. Earwaker (Canterbury), Lynch

(Timaru, Oamaru), P.Nolan(Otago), M.Thomas(Invercargill), McMeekin (Midland, Westport, Nelson, Picton ), Wilson(Kawa Kawa , Whangarei, Dargaville.)

#### OFFICERS ELECTED 1898.

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President : Mr.Bullock

Vice-President : Mr.Hobbs

Secretary : Mr.Edwards

Treasurer : Mr.Elvin.

Committee : Messrs. Marshall, Woodbury, Haig, Burrows, Hawkins, Dun

#### DELEGATES TO THE A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE 1900.

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Messrs. Bullock and Edwards (Executive Officers), Nolan, Duncan (Otago), A.Gaw(Oamaru), C.Holmes(Timaru), A.Dunn, W.Flower (Canterbury), H.Thomas(Wellington), J.Stone(Dannevirke and Napier), T.Wilson(Palmerston North), C.Leek(Auckland, Whangarei, Kawa Kawa Dargaville), E.Tiddle (Wanganui), G.Bright(Nelson Picton, Midland, Westport).

#### NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1900.

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President : Mr.Hobbs

Vice-President : Mr.Haig

Secretary : Mr.Edwards

Treasurer : Mr.Elvin.

Committee : Messrs. Woodbury, Marshall, Bullock, Dunn, Barr, Scott Tilleyshort, Flower.

#### DELEGATES TO THE A.S.R.S. CONFERENCE MARCH 1902.

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Messrs. Warren, O'Keefe( Auckland, Kawa Kawa, Whangarei, Dargaville), Huston(Napier, Dannevirke), Austin(Wellington Cross Creek ), Wilson(palmerston North), Parry(Wanganui, New Plymouth), Williams Thomas(Invercargill), Truman, Barr(Canterbury), Holmes(Timaru), Verey(Oamaru), Nolan, Patterson(Otago), Guthrie(Westport, Midland Nelson, Picton ).



## NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1902.

President : Mr. Haig                      Vice-President Mr.Bullock  
Secretary : Mr.Edwards                  Treasurer : Mr. Barr.  
Committee : Messrs. Woodbury, Johnson, Hiskins,Burrows, Bird,  
Nelson, MacLay, Samuels.

## APPENDIX B.

DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCES OF THE R.O.I.

AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE R.O.I. 1895-1902

DELEGATES TO THE R.O.I. NATIONAL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 1895.

Messrs. P.A.Duncan(Invercargill), J.J.Brownell, S.J.Loring(Dunedin)  
J.Gray, A.W.Morgan(Christchurch), R.W.McVilly, F.W.Styles,A.Duncan  
(Wellington,Picton,Nelson), J.Faris(Hapier), C.A.Marcus,R.J.Aekins  
(Wanganui), A.H.Mellor, J.Mavdonald(Auckland.).

OFFICERS ELECTED 1895.

President : Mr.S.J.Loring                      Vice-President : Mr.A.Duncan  
Secretary : Mr.McVilly                      Treasurer : Mr.Dawes.  
Committee : Messrs. Styles(chairmen),Stubbs,Faris Mellor,Triggs.

## DELEGATES TO THE R.O.I. CONFERENCE 1897.

Messrs. J.Stevenson, J.Young(Auckland),R.Aekins,A.H.Mellor (V.P.)  
(Wanganui), Faris(Napier, W.Bourke, G.A.C. ROBieson,F.W.Styles(  
Wellington), E.M.Carr, P.Couch, J.Frame (Christchurch), G Matthew-  
son,C.L.Russell(Dunedin),Brehner(Invercargill)Dawes and Mc.Villy.

# NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1897.

President : Mr.F.W.Styles                      Vice-President : Mr.A.H.Mello  
 Secretary : Mr.C.D.Morpeth                      Treasurer : Mr.Bourke.  
 Committee : Messrs. Payne, Mc.Cartney, Rowe, Robieson, Troupe, Pye-  
 Smith, Hutchison. Mr.Mc.Villy was elected but was unable to accept

# DELEGATES TO THE R.O.I. CONFERENCE 1898.

Messrs. J.Stevenson, J.Young(Auckland), R.Hislop(Napier), C.F.Day  
 (Wanganui), W.Bourke, J.H.Firth, F.S.Pope(Wellington), C.A.Marcus  
 J.F.Mc.Carthy, E.M.Carr(Canterbury), J.Eden, G.Barclay(Otago),  
 W.Macleod(Invercargill) F.W.Styles(President) and C.D.Morpeth.

# NATIONAL OFFICERS R.O.I. ELECTED 1898.

President : Mr.Stevenson                      Vice-President : Mr.C.A.Marc  
 Secretary : Mr.C. .Morpeth                      Treasurer : Mr.Bourke.  
 Committee : Messrs.Faris, Mc.Cartney, Pope, Styles, Lucy, Besant, Brigh

# DELEGATES TO THE R.O.I. CONFERENCE 1901

Messrs. Styles and Mooney(Auckland), A.H.O'Laughlin(Wanganui),  
 J.Jeffares, D.D.Weir(Wellington), J.Frame, T.E.Boyce(Christchurch)  
 Duff, Mc.Kellar(Dunedin), A.Graham(Invercargill).Morpeth, Stevenson  
 Marcus(Executive Officers).

# CHIEF NATIONAL OFFICERS ELECTED 1901

President : Mr. F.W.Styles                      Vice-President: Mr.A.Graham  
 Secretary : Mr.C.D.Morpeth.  
 Committee : Messrs Besant, Styles, Weir, Batten, Dawson, Jeffares, Hunt,  
 Aicken.

## APPENDIX C

## AND CHIEF RULES OF THE A.S.R.S.

## OBJECTS.

(1) To improve the conditions and protect the interests of all classes of railway servants in every lawful way.

(2) To endeavour, by lawful means, to obtain and maintain reasonable hours of duty and fair rates of wages.

(3) To promote a good understanding between employers and employed, the better regulation of their relations and the settlement of disputes between them by arbitration or, failing same by other lawful means.

(4) To provide temporary financial assistance to members suffering through unjust treatment arising out of, or in, the course of employment.

(5) To provide legal assistance, when necessary, in matters pertaining to the employment of members, or for securing compensation to members who suffer injury by accident in their employment occasioned by negligence of their employer, or those for which their employer is liable

(6) To use every effort to provide for the safety of railway work and railway travelling.

(7) To provide a Sickness Benefit Fund for members of the union in accordance with rules to be made to regulate the same.

(8) To provide a Sick Benefit Fund in accordance with rules to be made to regulate the same.

(9) To print and publish the magazine...known as the "N.Z. Railway Review" and ..other magazines as may be conducive to carr

# RULES

Many of the rules have been indicated in the text, amongst others were :

(1) Membership : Any person employed on any New Zealand Railway authorised by Parliament to carry goods or passengers, was eligible for membership, on paying his entrance fee and subscription and on being proposed and seconded by two financial members of the Society.

## (2) Government :

a. For the supreme government there was (after 1898) a Biennial Conference of members elected from the branches together with the President and General Secretary. This conference was empowered to amend, alter and make rules, to elect or remove any officer, to make or abolish any office, to distribute the funds, to strike such levies as were deemed necessary to further the objects of the union etc.

b. For the general management of the Union there was to be, in addition to the President, an Executive Council for election to which all financial members were eligible. The powers of the Executive Council were limited to the management and superintendence of the Union. The decision of the Executive was binding on all members and branches until and unless reversed by a Biennial General Meeting.

The President and the Vice-President were elected by the delegates at the Biennial Conference.

c. Branches : Twenty or more railway employees could forward a request for the formation of a branch, but it was optional with the Executive Council to refuse a dispensation for opening. Each branch was to be managed by a Branch Committee.

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APPENDIX D      OBJECTS AND RULES OF THE R.O.I. ( As in 1895)

OBJECTS.  
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(1) To promote the general welfare of its members by any means not inconsistent with the Railway rules and regulations.

(2) To follow a feeling of amity and good- fellowship and loyalty to the Government.

(3) To take on any matter such action as the Executive Council may consider advisable.

(4) To do such other things as will promote the well-being of members and to an esprit de corps.

(5) No political or religious matters shall be discussed

MEMBERSHIP.  
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Any person holding any permanent office or employment who is paid at an annual rate of pay or any foreman..... or any other person, who, in the opinion of the Executive Council, is equally eligible through holding a position of responsibility on any Government railway in New Zealand shall be eligible for membership.

GOVERNMENT  
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Government shall be vested in

(a) An Executive Council comprised of the President, Vice-President, General Treasurer and one elective member from each branch of the Institute. .... The General Secretary and the General Treasurer shall be appointed by the Council.

An annual meeting of the Executive Council was to be held in February, if possible each year and the Councillors were to be elected each December.

Originally the President and the Vice-President were elected by a general vote of the R.O.I., but this was soon altered and all officers except the permanent paid secretary were chosen by the Annual Councillors. The expenses of the annual conference were charged on the general fund.

The Executive Council or the Executive Committee may make a levy or levies on each member of the Institute for any special purpose.

(b) When the Executive Council is not in session the Institute was managed by the Executive Committee, comprised of the President, Vice-President and General treasurer, ex-officio, and five members appointed by the Council at its annual meeting. the General Secretary shall be subject to the instruction of the Executive Committee and shall reside at the headquarters of the Institute.

(c) Branches . The members of the Institute resident in each branch may , subject to specified limitations, elect annually from amongst themselves a branch committee of not less than seven members, including a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer. Each branch shall meet yearly not later than January to transact business and shall also meet at other times if necessary.

#### SUBSCRIPTION

The subscription shall be at the rate of one half penny for every pound of salary per month , provided that this shall not exceed two shillings and six-pence.

# APPENDIX E

## PETITION OF CHARLTON DOUGLAS MORPETH AS GENERAL SECRETARY TO, AND ON BEHALF OF , THE MEMBERS OF THE N.Z. RAILWAY OFFICERS INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER, 1899.

The petition was justified on the grounds that the existent classification of railway servants was inadequate , and in no way comparable to that of the Post and Telegraph employees, whose duties were not of such a responsible nature as those of railway servants. It was also feared by the officers that the concessions promised the public in railway tariff might be at the expense of the staff. Schedules were attached to the petition comparing the position of wages in the Railway and the Postal Departments.

### SCHEDULE A COMPARISON OF DISTRICT MANAGEMENT .

	POSTAL		RAILWAY
AUCKLAND	Chief Postmaster, Auckland	£500	District Traffic Manager
	Chief Clerk	£355	£550
	Chief Postmaster Thames	£425	Traffic Clerk (Auckland-
	Chief Clerk	£220	£250.
WELLINGTON	Chief in Charge	£400	D.T.M. Well.
	2 Chief Clerks	£300	Traffic Clerk
	Chief Postmaster Napier	£425	£385
	Chief Clerk	£250	£230
CHRISTCHURCH	Chief Postmaster CH. CH.	£500	D.T.M. CH. CH .
	Chief Clerk	£355	Traffic Clerk
	Chief Postmaster Timaru	£425	£550
	Chief Clerk	£325	£300

Other examples are also given for the smaller centres.

### SCHEDULE B ANNUAL SALARIES

# SCHEDULE B CONTINUED

<u>Postmaster</u>	<u>per annum</u>	<u>Station Master per annum</u>
Auckland	£500	£250
Palmerston North	£300	£220
Fielding	£300	£180
Wellington	£400	£250
Napier	£425	£220
Christchurch	£500	£300
Dunedin	£500	£300

etc.

# SCHEDULE C CLERICAL STAFF

	<u>Posta and Telegraph</u>	<u>Railway</u>
7th. class	none	£100-150 annum
6th. " "	£115-180	£160-180
5th. " "	£190-200	none
5th (for long service) class	£190-250	£190-220
4th. " "	£260-300	£230-250
3rd. " "	£315-355	£260-300
2nd. " "	£370-400	£315-350
1st. " "	£400-550	£375-400.



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